

CALIF. JUNIOR COLLEGE

AN OUTLINE OF CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

BY
erbert
THOMAS H. DICKINSON



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PREFACE

IN the book that is before us two qualities will, without doubt, be remarked. These are the wide extent and inclusiveness of its subject-matter, and the rigorous condensation of its treatment. Perhaps there will be those who will claim that the subject-matter is too broad, that by no stretch of meaning can the term "contemporary" be enlarged to cover the movements of a hundred years. To these objections, which at first view appear to be valid, it can only be answered that if the term "contemporary" has any critical meaning for our time, this meaning must go beyond the mere accidents of date and inhere in those qualities that make the theater of our time a different theater from any that has gone before. If we are to understand the differentiating qualities of the current drama of Europe and America, we must seek for these in the social, intellectual, and art events of the early nineteenth century. Herein lies the best justification for the broad inclusiveness of this book. As to its quality of condensation perhaps few will be found to raise objections. Readers will ask only that whatever its length the book present the facts of contemporary drama fairly in their proper emphasis and relationship.

Any book that seeks to outline the history of an art form works under definite limitations. These limitations should be faced and admitted. They arise from the fact that many of the qualities that give vitality and beauty to a work of imagination are beyond the reach of the his-

PREFACE

torical critic. These are essentially the "art" qualities that spring from the creative genius of the artist. No survey can reproduce them or bring again that rare meeting of creative mind and appropriate moment that distinguishes every significant work of creative imagination. There is left then for the historical critic the evaluation and representation of the primary urgencies and motives, the implied interests and ideas, the changing standards, formulas, and movements underlying or accompanying the art, but not themselves constituting it. Lacking the means to expound the mysterious vitality of the plant itself, we can in such a book as this only outline the plan of the garden and show how it has been cultivated by successive generations of workers into its present form. Here we have the chief reason why no general outline should ever be depended upon alone for an understanding of the drama. The best value of an outline will come from its use in connection with the study of the plays themselves.

For the errors of judgment and fact in this book the author alone is responsible. And yet it goes without saying that the book could not have been written had there not existed the accumulated researches of drama students in all countries. Nothing is more significant than the revival of interest in the theater in our day. Of this revival there have been assiduous exponents and commentators: in America, Brander Matthews, Archibald Henderson, Montrose J. Moses, Ludwig Lewisohn, Barrett H. Clark, Clayton Hamilton; in England, William Archer, A. B. Walkley, Allardyce Nicoll; in France, A. Filon, E. Faguet, Benoist-Hanappier, R. Doumic; in Germany, Otto Brahm, Paul Schlenther, R. F. Arnold;

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and others in each country too numerous to mention. The obligations to those named and to others listed in bibliographies are constant.

THOMAS H. DICKINSON

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Chief European Dramatists, edited by Brander Matthews.

Chief Contemporary Dramatists, First and Second Series, edited by Thomas H. Dickinson.

Contemporary Plays, edited by Thomas H. Dickinson and Jack R. Crawford.

Chief British Dramatists, edited by Brander Matthews and P. R. Lieders.

AN OUTLINE OF
CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

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BOOK ONE

THE ROOTS OF CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

AN OUTLINE OF CONTEMPORARY DRAMA



CHAPTER ONE

A SURVEY AND A SUMMARY

**International Scope of the Drama — Periods of Contemporary Drama —
Factors of the Contemporary Play**

International scope of the drama THIS book outlines the developments in dramatic composition in England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Russia, the Scandinavian countries, and America during the contemporary period. For the purposes of this survey these developments are treated as having international scope, and as occurring on the stage of the Western world of Europe and America, rather than as restricted by national boundary lines. For the convenience of those who wish to follow the purely national developments in drama during the period under review, there is added to the Third Book a chapter containing lists of the chief dramatists of the several nations by periods and types of plays.

Periods of contemporary drama In this study the activities of contemporary playwriting are treated as falling into three periods as follows:

1. *The First Period*, which contains the roots of contemporary drama, includes the events in the history of the theater from the beginning of the nineteenth century

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until the late eighteen-eighties. This period covers the decline of romanticism, the rise of the popular play, the development of the thesis and problem play, and culminates in the work of Ibsen. This period is treated in the First Book.

2. *The Second Period*, which is an era of theatrical revival, covers the events in theatrical organization and playwriting from the late eighteen-eighties until the beginning of the new century. Within a period of fifteen years there occur the reorganization of the theater, the rise of the naturalistic play, and that burst of creative genius that placed the theater in a high position among the activities of the time. This period is treated in the Second Book.

3. *The Third Period*, which is an era of artistic experiment, covers the activities in playwriting and production from the opening of the twentieth century to the present. Chief among the developments of this period has been the enlargement of the conception of play construction from that of literary composition to that of a synthesis of the arts. With this have come, naturally, violations of former literary restraints and conventions; as well as various experiments toward new conventions of the theater. This period is treated in the Third Book.

Factors of the contemporary play It will be noted that, during the periods above outlined, there has been a progressive change in the theories of what constitutes a play. These theories vary so from time to time that no purpose would be served by attempting to make a hard-and-fast definition of drama, or of the dramatic. But the raw material, upon which the imagination of the play-

A SURVEY AND A SUMMARY

wright works, can, at least for purposes of suggestion and classification, be isolated. Of the raw material of contemporary drama four factors stand out:

- (1) The factors derived from the literary tradition of the theater;
- (2) The factors derived from the folk theater and folk ceremonial;
- (3) The factors derived from current psychology and social issues;
- (4) The factors derived from the non-literary arts.

The factors mentioned above are not mutually exclusive. No claim is made that they satisfy all theories as to what constitutes a play as a work of art or as a product of social imagination. The classification by factors is offered merely for suggestion and as a guide to be kept in mind in employing the condensed outline of contemporary drama that follows.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DECLINE OF THE ROMANTIC PLAY

Classical and Romantic Drama — Fate and Free Will in Drama — The Storm and Stress Movement — Goethe and Schiller — The French Romantic Revival — Victor Hugo — Romanticism and Revolt — The Bourgeois Drama — The New Form — Decline of the Romantic Play

In Chief European Dramatists:

Hernani, by Victor Hugo, in translation by Mrs. Newton Crosland.

Götz von Berlichingen, by Wolfgang von Goethe, in translation by Sir Walter Scott.

Wilhelm Tell, by Friedrich Schiller, as translated by Sir Theodore Martin.

Drama not a branch of literature AMONG the factors mentioned in our opening chapter as constituting the modern play the first, or literary factor, has long been given the most serious consideration. Like the novel and the lyric, drama was supposed to be a form of literature. As literature, plays were read in the library, studied in the schools, recited from the platform. It is not difficult to see how this conception of drama arose. The drama was an art of words. Its records were kept from generation to generation on the printed page. The great plays of the past, of Sophocles, of Shakespeare, were great poems which were read and studied in the same way in which Virgil and Dante were read and studied. In their interest in the substance derived from the printed page people too seldom stopped to think that the original drama that had created the fame of Sophocles and Shakespeare was based on many elements of which literature was but one. In the nineteenth century the importance of these other factors came to be realized on a wide scale. And men began to act on the idea that drama and literature were

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not one art, but different and separate arts. As the literary tradition of the play declined, they began to call more and more upon factors derived from folk habits, the current interests of the crowd, and the resources of the other arts. In so doing they were returning the play to its original form in which verse and the refinements of language were only incidental features.

*Classical
versus ro-
mantic
drama*

The decline of the literary tradition of the drama had been foreshadowed in the contest which had been waged between the great schools of dramatic composition. The the-

ories of classical drama, based upon the writings of the Greek tragedians and their Roman imitators, had, at the Renaissance, been inserted again into the fabric of modern culture. In the hands of Racine and Corneille, Voltaire, and Dryden, classical drama had obtained a strong hold upon the literary stage. Against this form of drama the romantic play had found its origin entirely in modern times. Speaking roughly there are two sources of romantic drama, the plays of Shakespeare, his precursors and followers, and the plays of Lope de Vega and of Calderon. The sources of English and Spanish romantic drama are distinct, but their influences blend in the later current which is to sweep the stage of Europe and is to lead directly into the drama of the present.

*Differences
between clas-
sicism and
romanticism*

What were the important differences between the classical and the romantic play? On the one hand these differences concerned matters of form. The classical play was as

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a rule regular in form, it obeyed the unities; it submitted itself to the controls of discipline in the expression of emotion. Establishing an objective standard and maintaining it in strictness, it never lightened the tension by comic appeal or by lyrical outbursts. It differentiated neatly between tragedy and comedy. Quite unlike this was the romantic play. It was irregular, inspired, and sometimes overleaped the barriers of discipline in the expression of feeling; it was subjective; it mingled tragedy and comedy; it broke into lyrical strains. In other words, while the classical play was controlled by abstract standards, the romantic play was inspired by human motives and passions.

Fate and Free Will

These external differences indicated deeper oppositions within. In all that is known as motive and psychology the gulf between the classical and the romantic drama was as profound as that which lies between the minds of the ancient and the modern world. The classical dramatist considered the universe to be at the command of an external power wielded in an arbitrary manner. The actions of men were circumscribed and conditioned by an external Fate. The romantic drama treated the world of events as if this world were molded and played upon by the wills of men. In the one drama Fate was the essential feature; in the other, Will. It is not hard to see which drama would be preferred by an age which had produced the American and the French Revolutions and had read Rousseau. The romantic drama answered the call of modern times.

THE DECLINE OF THE ROMANTIC PLAY

The battle of the classics and the moderns For more than two centuries these two forms and philosophies contended for the control of the literary drama of Europe. The hold of the classic tradition was strong. But both from England and from Spain the influence of the romantic drama moved irresistibly. The victory of romanticism is first seen in the increasing vogue of Shakespeare in the theater of Europe. Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* of 1768-69, the Shakespearian performances of Friedrich Ludwig Schröder in 1776, and the Schlegel-Tieck translations of 1797-1833 started the current in Germany. In France the influence of Shakespeare moved more slowly, but the Letourneau translations of 1776-81, the visits of the English tragedians to Paris in 1822 and 1828, led the way to the romantic revival of Hugo, Dumas père, and their followers.

The "storm and stress" movement By the beginning of the nineteenth century the greatest poets of all lands were trying their hands at plays written in the English or the Spanish manner. This means that these men were trying to interpret in elevated poetic form the "human" or common interests of man. A movement that set its stamp on all the subsequent history of the stage was the "storm and stress" movement of Germany. Established by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and reaching its height in the dramatic work of Goethe and Schiller, the German storm and stress movement is one of the foundation stones of the modern drama. It based an opposition against the pseudo-classicism of France on an appeal to the universality of Shakespeare. With the playwrights of the storm and stress school the modern theater

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comes to grips with modern life. The gigantic passions that moved the plot were derived from the new social energies and enthusiasms. The temper and interests of the storm and stress movement still recur from time to time in contemporary drama.

In many respects Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) and Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) stand at the threshold of the modern era of drama. They ally themselves with the literary drama of the past; as they grow older they tend more toward the abstract controls of classicism, and away from the burning human enthusiasms of youth. And yet both in their youth wrote plays containing promises of the coming age. Among Goethe's storm and stress plays were *Götz von Berlichingen*, 1773, and *Clavigo*, 1774. Like the work of young Goethe the earliest work of Schiller was inspired by rebellion. *Die Räuber*, 1781, *Fiesco*, 1783, *Kabale und Liebe*, 1784, were in the current of later drama.

The romantic revival in France Second only to the storm and stress movement in supplying the energy by which the modern theater has been motivated is the romantic revival in the French theater. Victor Hugo and his fellows turned to romanticism in reaction against the dullness and uniformity of French classicism. The same force of human enthusiasm that turned the young poet toward the passionate interests of men later turned the romancer over to social issues and campaigns of reform. Hugo's opinions are expressed in his Preface to the play of *Cromwell* published in 1827. He holds that the supreme justification of drama is the sense of life that it presents. This he would obtain in drama in the same way that it is manifested in life, by ironic and grotesque

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antitheses, by vivid contrasts, by a continual mingling of the expected and the surprising. Hugo holds that it is false to build an art alone on "abstract types of purely metaphysical idea." In these ideas of Hugo's it is not hard to find many promises of later naturalism. But he was not a naturalist; he was not indeed entirely successful in putting into effect his own theories. He was a great poet who enunciated the doctrine that destroyed the power of classicism in its stronghold, and by his energy and social vision prepared the way for the new era in the theater.

Victor Hugo (1802-85), poet, dramatist, and reformer, did all his playwriting between his twenty-fifth and his fortieth years. Among his plays are *Cromwell*, 1827, *Marion de Lorme*, 1829, *Hernani*, 1830, *Le Roi s'amuse*, 1832, *Lucrèce Borgia*, 1833, *Marie Tudor*, 1833, *Ruy Blas*, 1838, *Les Burgraves*, 1843. Second to Hugo as the creator of the romantic movement in the French theater was Alexandre Dumas père (1802-70). Among his plays, which were characterized by great vitality and popular appeal, are *Henri III et sa cour*, 1829, *Christine*, 1830, *Napoléon Bonaparte*, 1831, *La Tour de Nesle*, 1832.

Romanticism and revolt For our purposes the significance of the struggle between romanticism and classicism lies in the introduction of the motive of *revolt* into contemporary drama. The classical drama had been built on the standards of a theater that had withstood the changes of two thousand years. It had been supported by the world of aristocracy and learning having its capital in Paris. Against this there now appeared a new and untried form of drama written originally by men from outside culture's breastworks, a drama unformed, negligent

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of rules, violating even the decencies of the older theater, and concerning itself with the interests and passions of men who had never before been admitted to the sacred circle of art. It need not be said that this literary struggle paralleled events in the social and political world. Significantly enough romanticism was keyed to the voice of the many rather than of the few; it was the organ of revolt rather than of restraint. Long after the struggle between romanticism and classicism had lost all meaning, revolt continued to supply the *leitmotif* of the contemporary theater.

Conflict of classes An indication of the changed temper of the stage, as of the times, is found in the introduction into the action of the play of classes of people not before considered of importance in the drama. With all his wide humanity Shakespeare had never been conscious of the conflict of classes. To him there had been only one class, and this the ruling class to which his plays were addressed. But by the beginning of the nineteenth century the romantic play had come to the expression of class antagonisms of whose existence playwrights had never before been aware. In France Beaumarchais in *Le Barbier de Séville*, 1775, and *Le Mariage de Figaro*, 1784, had given a foretaste of the Revolution by showing the servant in ironical opposition to the master. In Germany Goethe had in *Götz von Berlichingen* shown the figure of a champion of the oppressed, a fearless fighter for freedom who ends his life with the cry, "Es lebt die Freiheit," and Schiller had in *Die Räuber* written the chief revolutionary drama of German literature. From these plays there blows down into the nineteenth century an heroic strain

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of Byronic heroes nursing enlarged egos and the sense of social wrong. A psychology of misanthropy and disillusionment was created for these characters that has gone far to embitter and to sentimentalize later drama. The conception of "society the villain" used so often in later realistic tracts is the product, not of science, but of romanticism. Among dramatists who wrote romantic plays of an accusatory cast are such widely separated geniuses as Lord Byron, Sheridan Knowles, Ostrovsky, Gogol, Count Alexis Tolstoy, Ibsen, Strindberg, Niccolini, and Oehlenschläger.

The bourgeois drama The revolutionary motive was the direct result of the appearance in drama of the great middle class. Long before the theater was employed as an agency of social revolt, measures had been taken to enlarge the compass of serious drama to comprise the tragedy and comedy of common life. In the Preface to *Don Sanche d'Aragon*, Corneille had recognized that tragedy should not treat alone the sorrows of the illustrious classes. But it remained for the English dramatist George Lillo (1693-1739) to put these doctrines into effect. In creating his tradesman's tragedy, Lillo provided a pattern which was promptly employed in France by Diderot in *le genre sérieux*, or "bourgeois tragedy," and in Germany by Lessing in his *bürgerliches Trauerspiele*. Nor was tragedy alone adapted to the motives of the middle classes. From France there came *la comédie larmoyante* of Nivelle de la Chaussée, which became in England the "sentimental comedy" that it was the delight of Goldsmith to laugh from the boards.

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*The new
forms of
drama*

What tendencies now are to be noticed in the structure and form of plays? In the first place, these plays, dedicated as they were to the new popular taste, discarded once for all the austere regulations left over from aristocratic conceptions of the theater. First to go was the rigid differentiation between types of plays. In the classical dictionary of drama there had been two forms, *tragedy* (drama that purges the soul by pity and terror), and *comedy* (drama that chastens morals by reason or ridicule). Already in Shakespeare's time this division had disappeared and a new middle form had arisen known as *tragi-comedy*. Sir Philip Sidney, the first to mention tragi-comedy, declares that it is distinguished by "mingling kings and clowns." Behind tragi-comedy there is an idea that recognizes the new qualities of character upon which the play was coming to depend. Drama is no longer derived entirely from heroic and inevitable conflicts of majestic characters. A new form of dilemma now offers itself to the playwright arising from the moral compromises of little men. From the eighteenth century onward it is impossible to apply clearly discriminating names to different classes of plays. Plays are still called tragedies and comedies though they may satisfy none of the strict rules of the ancients and may mingle the two types in one play. The majority of plays are to-day known simply as "drama," "play," "drame," "pièce," or "Schauspiel," according as they are written for dramatic production in England, France, or Germany.

*Adaptation
to popular
taste*

Side by side with these compromises in structure, important changes were taking place in the temper and appeal of the play. Many

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of these changes were forced by the competition of the new popular drama which was arising to contest with the literary drama. As sentiments were lowered and motives became more commonplace, majestic language was no longer appropriate. Verse therefore disappeared in favor of prose. At the same time there was an enhancement of the purely external features of the play. Urged by similar forces, dramatic form moved at the same time in two directions, on the one hand to an exaggeration of sensational effect, on the other hand to an increased emphasis upon observation and the imitation of the surfaces of life.

Decline of the romantic play As the nineteenth century ripened, the romantic play in verse fell into an anomalous position. Respected still by the educated classes, retained on the stage by a thinning group of actors of the old school, supported in the theaters of tradition, in the subsidized, court, and monopoly theaters, the romantic play was well-nigh ignored by the great body of the people. Under these conditions the position of the romantic dramatist was an unhappy one. The nineteenth century shows many examples of great poets who essayed once or twice a romantic play in verse only to give over stage ambitions. The romantic play was increasingly relegated to the closet and to extraordinary production. Conditions varied, of course, from country to country, but in no country did the literary drama prosper. And in every country the activities in behalf of a new drama and a new theater went on with vigor. Meanwhile other forces were at work. While the edifice of popular entertainment was being erected, men of finer taste were seeking for a form of play which would give free scope to the

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doctrine of Free Will, would identify itself with the interests and passions of men, and yet would be formed in order and beauty. At different times it was thought that these visions would be realized through a rebirth of classicism. The hopes for a neo-classicism have never been realized. The new drama came indeed and with it a certain order and a certain beauty. But it did not derive from the ancient literary tradition. It was the product of the theater of the people.

Among the literary dramatists of the early nineteenth century not otherwise studied in this book are, in France: Alfred de Vigny, George Sand, Jules Sandeau, Casimir Delavigne, Prosper Mérimée, E. Legouv  , Fran  ois Ponsard, Henri de Bornier; in England: Robert Southey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Shelley, Walter Savage Landor, Tennyson, Browning, among the poets of first rank, and Richard Lalor Shiel, C. R. Maturin, Thomas Noon Talfourd, W. G. Wills, J. Westland Marston, Sheridan Knowles, and Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, among second-rate poets; in Germany: Ernst Raupach, Christian Dietrich Grabbe, Georg B  chner, Ferdinand Raimund, Ludwig Tieck, A. W. Schlegel, F. de la Motte Fouqu  , Zacharias Werner, A. Oehlenschl  ger (writing in German), L. A. von Arnim, K. Brentano, K. L. Immermann, J. Mosen, "F. Halm" (Baron von M  nch-Bellinghausen), Rudolph von Gottschall, Emanuel Geibel; in Russia: M. I. L  rmontov, A. S. Pushkin, Count Alexis Tolstoy, A. S. Guboy  dov; in Spain: Manuel Bret  n de los Herreros, Antonio Garc  a Guti  rrez, Angel de Saavedra, Jos   Zorrilla, Manuel Tamayo y Baus, Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch; in Italy: Alessandro Manzoni, Ugo Foscolo, Silvio Pellico, Giambattista Niccolini, Felice Cavallotti, Pietro Cossa, Paolo Giacometti.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE RISE OF THE POPULAR THEATER

The Popular Theater — Farce — Vaudeville — Melodrama — Commedia dell' Arte — Opéra-Comique — August Kotzebue — Guilbert de Pixérécourt — Significance of Melodrama — Augustin Scribe — The "Well-Made" Play — Victorien Sardou — An Era of Theatercraft

In Chief British Dramatists:

Richelieu, or The Conspiracy, by Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

London Assurance, by Dion Boucicault.

The popular theater

WE have studied some of the events in the literary theater looking toward the development of contemporary drama. But it is not alone in the literary drama that the foundations of the nineteenth-century theater are laid. They are laid as well in the property rooms, the rehearsal galleries, and on the stages of the popular theater.

Relation between literary and popular theaters

Naturally it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between the literary and popular strains in drama. Traces from the one are continually stealing over into the other. And yet for practical purposes the distinction must be made. Briefly stated the literary drama is based upon the conventions of the written word. In writing a literary play the author is seeking a double end. He is creating a rhetorical product for publication and reading; and he is creating the text of a play for production. The popular drama, on the other hand, is identified with the unreflective, usually the unrecorded, activities of entertain-

THE RISE OF THE POPULAR THEATER

ment and physical expression. It appeals to mass interests and mass emotions, which find their expression rather through action, dance, song, and pantomime than through literary symbols. It must always be remembered that modern drama finds its origin, not only in the conscious literary expressions of civilization, but as well in these expressions of folk activity that are hardly self-conscious at all.

*Persistent
forms of
popular
drama*

As civilization spreads, many of the folk activities upon which the theater depends tend either to disappear or to seem to be degraded. A little observation shows that they

have not disappeared, and that it is not safe to assume that they have really been degraded. They have simply dropped below the level at which literature is interested in them, or they are seeking outlets through non-literary channels. Among the folk or popular forms of theater activity many persist in spite of the fact that a censorious criticism has assumed that they are debased forms. These persistent folk or popular forms of entertainment have had a far from unimportant part in the building of the contemporary theater. Among these the following may be enumerated for the part they play in contemporary drama:

1. FARCE is as old as horse-play and the practical joke. Farcical characters and plots occur in Aristophanes and Plautus and Terence. For our purposes farce is the outgrowth of the French Middle Ages when the form, known as *farsa* or *farsia* (from *farcire*, meaning to "stuff"), arose from the interpolated "gags" in the body of the play. A characteristic figure of farce is the dunce, or lack-wit;

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the subjects are derived from the stupidities, crafts, and petty villainies of character.

2. VAUDEVILLE is one of the most influential forms of popular dramatic art and the chief source, outside of literary tradition, of contemporary drama. Vaudeville in the sense of an entertainment with pantomime, jests, popular songs, and dancing, is of course universal. The modern form and name are probably derived from *vau-de-vire*, the name of fifteenth-century convivial songs. In eighteenth-century France vaudeville attained high vogue. First a satirical note was added to a popular ballad. Then came dialogue and the forms of a rudimentary play.

3. MELODRAMA in the sense of a sensational and sentimental play is as old as the vulgar theater. There are usually qualities in it of debased literary tradition. In its modern form melodrama, from *μέλος*, music, and *δρᾶμα*, action, is a dramatic composition accompanied by music. Later the musical factor disappears, and the play becomes a conventional fabric of exaggerated emotions. The first modern melodrama is said to have been *Pygmalion* (1775) by J. J. Rousseau.

4. COMMEDIA DELL' ARTE is an Italian form of entertainment going back to the Atellan fables of ancient Rome. It consists of an improvised comedy in costumes on conventionalized themes and with conventionalized personages. Dormant for some time the influence of the Commedia dell' Arte has been renewed in the theater during the last twenty years.

5. OPÉRA-COMIQUE as a popular form of entertainment is similar to vaudeville. The term "opéra-comique" means opera with spoken dialogue, and has no connection with the idea of comedy. In the history of music

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the form is associated with Italian *opera buffa*, and the German *Singspiel*.

Builders of the popular theater We have now to study the work of several men who more than any others were the artificers of modern theatrical entertainment.

In the strict sense none of these men were men of literature. On this account they were subject to detraction in their lifetime and misunderstanding or forgetfulness after their death. Nevertheless, it is true that it is upon their work quite as much as upon the work of the strictly traditional dramatists of literature that contemporary drama has been built. They solidified the theater as a popular agency of wide extent and influence. In their hands the theater became an international institution. While they could not be called artists they prepared the way for the artists of the theater who were to follow them.

Kotzebue and Pixérécourt August von Kotzebue (1761-1819) is the first great popularizer of the modern theater.

He connects himself directly with the two great popular strains of romanticism, (1) the storm and stress drama; and (2) bourgeois comedy, and proceeds to give them the widest currency. In both forms his compositions achieved sensational success throughout Europe. He wrote about two hundred plays. Among melodramas his most important were *Menschenhass und Reue*, adapted into English as *The Stranger*, and *Die Spanier in Peru*, adapted by Sheridan as *Pizarro*. Gilbert de Pixérécourt (1773-1844) was to France what Kotzebue was to Germany. Both attained wide popularity at home and were imitated, translated, and adapted

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abroad. Both devoted themselves to obvious forms of popular appeal to the exclusion of artistic designs in play-writing, and showed remarkable skill in the fabrication of plots and in the heightening of sensational effects. In 1797 Pixérécourt produced his first melodrama, *Victor; ou, L'Enfant de la Forêt*, played at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique three hundred and ninety-two times. *Coeline*, 1800, was even more popular, being played fourteen hundred times. Pixérécourt wrote sixty melodramas in addition to comedies and vaudevilles, and it is said that his plays had thirty thousand representations. He is chiefly known in English through Holcroft's successful adaptation of *Coeline* under the title *The Tale of Mystery*, 1802.

*Toward
standardiza-
tion of play-
writing*

The importance of the work of Kotzebue, Pixérécourt, and their fellows on the development of modern drama is admittedly great.

Few romantic dramatists escape the influence of their sensational strains. But if it were sensationalism alone that these men had contributed to the theater of the century they would hardly be worthy of more than a passing reference. They are important in the development of nineteenth-century drama because they provided that element of standardization of form that was the distinguishing mark of the new age of the theater. The theater was changing from a provincial institution serving local needs to an international institution supplying like fare to Germany, France, England, and the far Americas. In this process of change the melodramatists played a large part. They did this because their plays were easy to imitate, to adapt, and to produce. All plays were

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written by the same plan. Until our day melodrama was stereotyped to include the essential types of (1) the villain or traitor, typifying the vices; (2) the suffering heroine, embodying the virtues; (3) the hero, representing courage; (4) the simpleton, providing comic relief. The movements toward standardization begun by the melodramatists were completed by Scribe.

It would be obviously impossible to name all the great melodramatists of the nineteenth century. Some of these attained a high vogue and in their lifetime seemed to acquire a position comparable with that of the great dramatists of all time. With the passing of their vogue they fell into oblivion and it is characteristic of melodrama that it has no second blooming. Among French melodramatists of the early nineteenth century are Victor Ducange, Adolphe Dennery, Ernest Legouvé; among English melodramatists are Douglas Jerrold, Dion Boucicault, Gilbert A. à Beckett, Mark Lemon, Tom Taylor, Charles Reade, J. B. Buckstone, Benjamin Webster, Paul Meritt and Henry Pettitt, G. R. Sims; an interesting form of melodrama in Germany was the Fate Tragedy, *Schicksalstragödie*, created by Zacharias Werner. This had literary qualities closely associating it with the romantic play. Writers of German melodramas were A. W. Iffland, A. Müllner, C. E. von Houwald, Otto Heinrich von Gemmingen, "Friedrich Halm," Julius Mosen, and many others.

*The revolt
against
melodrama* More important than either Kotzebue or Pixérécourt in laying the foundations of the contemporary popular drama was Eugène Scribe. With all their cleverness in appealing to the crowd and in creating agencies of mass entertainment, both of the former were romanticists. They clung to the

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debased literary traditions that attached themselves to the reading margin of society. They failed to realize that for the entertainment of the care-free and thoughtless crowd melodrama was not perfectly adapted. It was too serious. It appealed too much to tears. In its excess of emotionalism it offended the hard-headed sanity of the average man and lent itself too readily to burlesque. Scribe recognized the shortcomings of melodrama. He saw that to be successful with the people you must interest them without probing too deeply into their hearts, you must give them the illusion of well-being, you must flatter their limitations, and not ask them to think. Scribe discarded the drama of literary tradition entirely and proceeded to build his theater on vaudeville.

*Eugène
Scribe*

Eugène Scribe was born December 24, 1791, in the Paris of the Revolution. He died in 1861 in the Paris of the Second Empire. It was characteristic of his genius as a showman that he could be happy under any government. He made it his business neither to instruct nor to reform. It was solely his function to amuse. As a result he became the first purveyor of dramatic entertainment to the Europe of the nineteenth century. Scribe lived an interesting life. Destined for the law he produced his first vaudeville when he was nineteen years old. Thereafter he devoted himself to the theater. His first success was won in 1815 with *Encore une Nuit de la garde nationale*, written in collaboration. Thenceforward he wrote unceasingly. Attaching himself to the Théâtre du Gymnase he made the fortune of that house and later supplied more than five hundred plays for the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, Théâtre de l'Odéon,

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Théâtre de l'Opéra, Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique, the Théâtre Français, and other theaters. A man of great charm and generosity he raised the craft of playwriting to popular esteem and became prosperous and influential. Though he never won the approval of literary critics he dominated the theater of Europe for half a century.

Scribe's plays Scribe's plays fall roughly into three classes. Of the first class, the comédie-vaudeville, Scribe wrote about three hundred. This was a light and joyous entertainment of verses, gags, and music, with some satire on contemporary foibles, some clean-cut character drawing, and an air of grace and irresponsibility. To the second class belong the more ambitious opéras-comiques and opéras which Scribe derived from old romances. Among the composers for whom he supplied libretti are Auber, Adam, Donizetti, Halévy, Meyerbeer, and Verdi. In the hands of Scribe the vaudeville and the opéra-comique came to a vogue never known before. He so vitalized and diversified the forms as to win the delighted approval of the audiences. The plays were in every way expert pieces of craftsmanship; they were easy to produce on the stage, easy to follow, and easy to imitate. There was in them nothing to perplex or to mislead. It is significant of the craftsmanship with which Scribe had developed these forms that he was able to employ them as the basis for his next attack upon the strongholds of the theater.

Scribe's serious plays To Scribe's third class of dramatic composition belong the famous "well-made" plays. These were to have a revolutionary influence on the stage.

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In 1822 Scribe took the manuscript of *Valérie*, which had been written as a vaudeville, broke it into parts to make acts, cut out the songs, and produced it at the Comédie Française as a serious drama. This play was not a success, but a later play, *Le Mariage d'Argent*, composed in a similar spirit, won immediate approval. Thereafter Scribe produced at the Comédie Française to increasing popular favor a series of these "comedy dramas." Some were written alone, and some in collaboration. Some were derived from popular stories, some from romances, some from history playfully handled. In composition all were of a single type, and this type was so definitely characterized that even to this day the more workmanlike plays of the popular theater are very likely to owe some debt to the pioneering craftsmanship of Scribe.

Among Scribe's "well-made" plays the following are notable: *Bertrand et Raton*, 1833, *L'Ambitieux*, 1834, *La Camaraderie*, 1837, *La Calomnie*, 1840, *Le Verre d'eau*, 1840, *Une Chaîne*, 1841, *Le Fils de Cromwell*, 1842, *Le Puff*, 1848, *Adrienne Lecouvreur* (with Ernest Legouvé), 1849, *Bataille de Dames* (with Legouvé, 1851), *La Czarine*, 1855.

Qualities of Scribe's plays It has been easy for later generations to ridicule the conventionalities and formulas of the well-made play. Probably everything that the critics have said against the literary qualities of Scribe's plays is true. They err not so much in what they say as in what they fail to say. They err in ignoring the fact that Scribe was approaching the theater from a new side. The literary drama had fallen to the ground. Scribe proceeds to create a lusty vehicle of public amuse-

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ment that had no taint of the written word. He was by no means without influence from the great figures of French dramatic literature. There were in his work qualities of the comedy of Molière, of Marivaux, of Diderot, and Beaumarchais. But he added to the qualities of these a genius for the contemporaneous. He was the first journalist among modern playwrights. He broke away from the pastoral scenes of the eighteenth century and introduced the street scenes, the shops, the petty bourgeoisie of the new democracy. Above all he had the gift of measure. This gift was partly derived from a regard for truth. There was no pretense in him or in his plays. But it was even more derived from his infinite technical tact. Scribe never treated controversial topics. He knew the moral formulas of the average man, the limits he sets in his search for truth. He knew the average man's courage and his cowardice. He knew when he could be tricked and beguiled, and when his prejudices were unassailable. Above all, he knew that the basis of middle-class law is security. Security he made the guiding motive of his serious plays, for the woman security in marriage, in the home, in the exercise of the feminine prerogatives; for the citizen security in the state, in business, in financial relationships, in conservative opinions.

The well-made play

Considered simply as a playwright with such qualities as these Scribe would be a man of some consequence. But he was more than a playwright who wrote successful plays. In creating the plays he created also the pattern by which dramas were composed during three generations. The pattern was at the same time logical and adroit. It was based upon a knowledge

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of human nature and of the limitations and resources of stage art. It was economical of means, crisp and graceful of address, and ninety per cent sure-fire. It depended on action rather than words. In characterization Scribe was something of a naturalist in that he was interested in putting on the stage real human beings and not reciting lay figures. But he was a naturalist of the school of Dickens rather than of Becque. Characters were symbolized in a striking trait of speech, manner, or appearance. But Scribe's real interest lay neither in the portrait nor in the satire. It lay entirely in being entertaining. To this end he dedicated all his skill, all his knowledge of men and the stage. He would have us understand that the story is always make-believe. Because it is make-believe he can treat his figures playfully, irreverently, even inconsistently if necessary in order to interest the audience. One must not be charged with an excessive admiration for the well-made play, nor with a wish for the standardization of art, if one admits that at the particular time at which this order of play appeared it performed an important service in clarifying dramatic construction, eliminating sentimentality, and transferring the interest from the spoken word to the character and to the event that lie behind the word.

*Victorien
Sardou*

By all odds the greatest craftsman of the modern European stage after Scribe is Victorien Sardou. Born in Paris in 1831 he displayed at the height of his powers a combination of the strains of the melodramatist and the writer of well-made plays. He died in 1908. The artifices and falsities of craftsmanship can hardly go further than they did in the drama of

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Sardou. And yet throughout his career he exerted a profound influence over the lesser dramatists of the time. Sardou's plays fall roughly into three classes: (1) Well-made plays modeled after the pattern of Scribe; (2) character satires based upon rural naturalism; (3) historical melodramas, many of which were written for Madame Sarah Bernhardt. With Sardou characterization is nothing. Nor has he any interest in structural perfection or the refinements of taste. His play exists solely to create an emotional effect. This he achieves usually through a "big scene" up to which he works slowly, sometimes through awkward preliminaries and from arbitrary premises. Sardou represents one extreme to which the methods of Scribe lead. We shall see that on another path Scribe had some followers who employed his devices for better ends.

Among Sardou's eighty or more plays the best known are: *Les Pattes de mouche*, 1860, *Nos Intimes*, 1861, *Les vieux Garçons*, 1865, *La Famille Benotton*, 1865, *Nos bons Villageois*, 1866, *Patrie*, 1869, *Rabagas*, 1872, *Dora*, 1877, *Daniel Rochat*, 1880, *Divorçons*, 1880, *Fédora*, 1882, *Théodora*, 1884, *La Tosca*, 1887, *Cléopâtre*, 1890, *Thermidor*, 1891, *Madame Sans-Gêne*, 1893, *Gismonda*, 1894, *Robespierre*, 1889, *La Sorcière*, 1903, *L'Affaire des poisons*, 1907.

Vogue of the well-made play The vogue of Scribe and of his invention, the well-made play, in the theater of Europe and America, has passed into the traditions of theatrical history. Scribe started to capture the theater of Europe for the well-made play by capturing the theater of France. He first established himself and his cre-

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ation in the Comédie Française. This historic institution has never recovered from the domain exercised over its repertory by this expert but soulless fashion of dramatic writing. Between 1823 and 1900 there were more productions of Scribe's plays at the Comédie Française than of any other dramatist. Augier, who comes second, learned his profession at the Scribe school. From France the influence of Scribe passes abroad. His plays were so translated, adapted, and imitated in all European countries that they provide the substantial basis of half the dramatic reputations of the mid-century. Upon the foundations of the well-made play was built the superstructure of modern commercialism in the theater. With Scribe playwriting becomes a well-paid profession. Those who followed the profession looked back to the author who taught them their trade. Some simply appropriated and adapted to their own uses the themes and situations of his plays. A larger number applied his principles and employed his patterns in the treatment of new stories. After Scribe the stage of Europe became for fifty years a world of craftsmen.

The well-made play in France

Appropriately enough it was in France, the home of Pixérécourt and Ducange, of Scribe and Sardou, that the greatest developments in the craft of playmaking were made. After Scribe French playwriting of the school of the well-made play follows two paths. In the one direction lay the expert and slightly artificial comedy that applies a logical method to the graces and something less than the wisdom of Molière. To this class of playwrights belong Eugène Labiche (1815-80), author of *Le Misanthrope et l'Auver-*

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gnat, 1852, *Le Voyage de M. Perrichon*, 1860, *La Poudre aux Yeux*, 1861; Edouard Pailleron (1838-99), author of *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie*, 1881; as well as such playwrights as Robert de Flers, Gaston Caillavet, Meilhac et Halévy, Georges Courteline, Francis de Croisset, Pierre Decourcelle, Georges Feydeau, Paul Gavault, Léon Hen- nique, Maurice Hennequin, Tristan Bernard, Pierre Vé- ber, Nozière (Fernand Weyl), André Rivoire, Alexandre Bisson, and Pierre Wolff. To the other class belong the makers of the more sensational theater plays who follow the path of Sardou, including such playwrights as Edmond Gondinet (1828-88), Georges Ohnet (1848-1918), Pierre Berton (1842-1912), Henri Kistemaeckers, and Henry Bernstein.

It should be noted that no attempt is made strictly to differentiate these writers according to classes of plays. It was characteristic of the well-made play that the au- thor turned at will from the most irresponsible comedy to an equally irresponsible "sensation" play.

*The well-
made play
abroad*

Between the influence of the well-made play in France and in other countries there were important differences. If the example of Scribe inspired the French playwrights to wonders of arti- fice and invention, as much cannot be said for its influ- ence in Germany, England, and America. For in these countries it was easier and less expensive to borrow, or at least to adapt, the French play in its entirety. For the reason that these plays depended upon situations rather than upon observation, they were as a rule as interesting in one country as in another. So it is that in spite of his lack of an international message, save that of laughter

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and common sense, Scribe becomes the first international playwright of the nineteenth-century theater. Just as he had captured the stage of France and turned it over to the entertainment of the people, Scribe captured the stage of Europe and either supplied its entertainments or the rules by which its entertainments were composed.

In Germany a selected edition of Scribe's plays had been issued in translation in 1842. Here as elsewhere the influence of the well-made play, apparent first in comedies and sensation pieces, is soon taken over into the social and "tendenz" drama. It is to be noted that in each country the Scribe method tends to be applied to native material. Among German playwrights who owe a debt more or less noteworthy to Scribe are Ernst Raupach, Karl von Holtei, F. Raimund, Johann Nestroy, Eduard von Bauernfeld, R. von Gottschall, Karl Gutzkow, Gustav von Moser, A. L'Arronge, F. von Schönthan, Gustav Kadelberg, Oscar Blumenthal, Ernst Niebergall, Roderich Benedix, Julius Rosen, Wilhelm Meyer-Förster.

In England the Scribe play is adapted or imitated by T. H. Lacy, Tom Taylor, Charles Reade, T. W. Robertson, J. R. Planché, Gilbert A. à Beckett, Mark Lemon, James Albery, Dion Boucicault, J. Palgrave Simpson, Charles Webb, E. L. Blanchard, F. C. Burnand, Henry Merivale.

In the Scandinavian countries the influence of Scribe was, as we shall see, to be even more important. In the early years of the last century Copenhagen was the only city in which the drama flourished. Of the one hundred and seventy-five plays published in the repertory of the Royal Theater of Copenhagen one third were of Scribe's authorship. Upwards of two thirds were written in the Scribe manner. The Director of this theater, J. L. Heiberg, was an indefatigable adapter and translator of Scribe's plays and vaudevilles. The influence of these facts on the drama of Ibsen will be seen.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE DRAMA OF IDEAS

Drama and Crowd Psychology — Alexandre Dumas *films* — The Play of Ideas — Emile Augier — The Young Germany Movement — Technique of the Thesis Play — Historical Significance of the Play of Ideas — The Play of Ideas in Europe and America

In *Chief European Dramatists*:

Le Gendre de M. Poirier, by Emile Augier; translated as *The Son-in-Law of M. Poirier*, by Barrett H. Clark.

Le Demi-Monde, by Alexandre Dumas *films*; translated as *The Outer Edge of Society*, by Barrett H. Clark.

The domination of France ONE of the striking features of modern dramatic history is the dominant influence maintained by France over the theater of Europe and America. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries French preëminence was expressed in the wide distribution of classical tragedy and comedy. In the nineteenth century France maintained her leadership through the agency of the well-made play. In this form of play Scribe and his followers had created a machine of entertainment that was in the exact sense of the word a "vehicle," in which could be displayed the actor's powers, the virtuosity of the producer, the arts of a stage-designer. This vehicle was readily exportable. It was alike serviceable to the French, the Germans, the Italians, English, and Americans.

The drama and social ideas

We have seen how careful Scribe was to avoid offending the prejudices of his audience. He had discovered a formula by which current

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topics might be employed in dramatic construction without arousing any of those clashes of opinion that usually accompany contemporary events. His rule was that, however serious the topic might be, it must be treated with a disarming levity. The audience must be convinced that the author has neither opinions nor convictions. While there are advantages to this system from the point of view of the entertainer, there are manifest disadvantages from the point of view both of the art of the stage and of public opinion. A situation arose in which two parties, not usually identified or even sympathetic, alike found themselves in opposition to the artificialities of the stage. The artists of the theater objected to the falsehoods and frivolity of the followers of Scribe. And thoughtful citizens charged the stage with a lack of social conscience. They felt that the stage should help in the general tasks of democracy rather than hinder. The play of ideas was the first result of the effort to attach a serious purpose to the well-oiled mechanism of the well-made play.

*The drama
and popular
control*

This subject is closely connected with another, namely, the growing control by the people of everything connected with the stage. In his care to avoid impinging upon the pet prejudices of the audience Scribe had in effect surrendered those discriminations that ordinarily belong to the artist in favor of the politician's reading of the crowd mind. Audiences were quick to enforce the control that the playwright had handed them. For long periods and in wide fields of theatrical activity it has appeared that final decision as to what the play should contain had passed away

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from the writer of the play and had been lodged in the auditor. It was of course natural that the play that served the great middle class should feel the pressure of the middle-class will, should reflect the middle-class judgment. There even grew up the "crowd-psychology" theory of dramatic composition, based upon the doctrines of Le Bon, which held in effect that the playwright is a stylus that moves at the direction of the mass mind. As long as the themes of plays are uncontroversial no particular problem, save that of artistic quality, is involved in the surrender to the crowd. But when the plays begin to deal with contemporary events, on which there are differences of opinion, the problems of art are closely identified with problems of social conscience.

*Alexandre
Dumas fils
and the thesis
play*

The employment of the play for the exposition of social and moral ideas had been clearly outlined by Diderot. But it was another Frenchman, Alexandre Dumas *fils*, who established the *pièce à thèse* in the theater of Europe. On the artistic value of Dumas's plays there may be differences of opinion. But no one can deny his importance as the inaugurator of the highly emotionalized thesis drama. Alexandre Dumas the younger was born in Paris in 1824, the natural son of the romanticist of the same name. Spending his youth in the Boulevards, the spoiled child of a profligate time, he first turned to the writing of romances inspired by *Werther*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Paul et Virginie*, and the novels of George Sand. His first success on the stage was won in the dramatization of his own novel *La Dame aux Camélias*, which was produced in 1852.

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Thereafter he continued to write plays until his death, which occurred in 1895. All of his works had a didactic purpose, and in conformity with this purpose, he prefaced each play with a long and serious preface.

In the first and perhaps most famous of Dumas's plays, *La Dame aux Camélias*, 1852, he makes a plea for the suffering courtesan. In *Le Demi-Monde*, 1855, he treats the courtesan as a product of the sex standards of society. In *Diane de Lys*, 1853, *La Femme de Claude*, 1873, and in *L'Etrangère*, 1876, he preaches a rigorous respect for the marital vow. In *La Question d'argent*, 1857, he studies the influence of money on character. In *Le Fils naturel*, 1858, and in *Le Père prodigue*, 1859, he studies the obligations of a father toward his illegitimate son. In *Les Idées de Madame Aubray*, 1867, he demonstrates the obligation of a man toward the woman he has seduced. Other plays of Dumas are: *L'Ami de femmes*, 1864, *Une Visite de noces*, 1871, *Les Danicheff*, 1876, *La Princesse de Bagdad*, 1881, *Denise*, 1885, *Francillon*, 1887.

The play of ideas In these plays a new note was introduced into the drama of Europe. To the irresponsible and frivolous entertainment of Scribe there was added a note of moral earnestness that nicely reflected the serious and half-sentimental social thinking of the mid-century. It was an enthusiastic age that paid serious attention to the catchwords of romantic revolt. Particularly it demanded of its playwrights and romancers that they should flatter the liberalism of the people. Dumas *fits* was far from an original thinker. He made no pretense to be one. But he was able to isolate and to dramatize the current social and moral attitudes and to set

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people to discussing the motives and principles that underlay the actions of his plays.

Dumas fils and liberal ideas It should be made clear that Dumas *fils* never carried the logic of his play a hair's breadth beyond the mental standards of his audience. He did not employ the play as a means of subjecting ideas to the acid test of reason and experience as did Ibsen. Nor did he deal with the corrective power of ideas as such, as did Shaw. He simply incorporated into the action of his play that strange *mélange* of sentimentalism, catchwords, and second-hand conceptions that in the crowd pass as ideas. Why was it then that for so long Dumas *fils* was given the credit of being a radical thinker? Simply because in the alignments of the times Dumas *fils* attached himself to the liberal opinion, while others of equal mental powers, but different inclinations, such as Augier, attached themselves to the conservative wings of thought. In this division of opinion the liberal is always the enthusiast. The conservative is the skeptic, the conservator who would let well enough alone and protect the standing order. These two shades of opinion were reflected in the drama of ideas. Because he stood for an unachieved ideal of charity, understanding, and justice, Dumas *fils* was often accused of immorality and anti-social tendencies. This charge was unjust. He made no appeal for the relaxing of the social bond. He merely asked that the social ideals that we profess have a greater part in our conduct of life. In particular he asked for greater charity and understanding in all matters pertaining to sex. His position on these matters brought him into conflict with the more conservative circles of society. But

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he always had strong support from the liberal-minded. He never took the position occupied by Ibsen of questioning the integrity, and therefore losing the support, of both the liberals and the conservatives.

Emile Augier If Dumas *fil*s makes himself the mouthpiece of the Romantic liberals in the theater, Emile Augier is the exponent of the conservative or classical temper of mind. The differences in mental inclination between Dumas *fil*s and Augier have been so much emphasized that critics sometimes ignore the fact that as playwrights they stand for the same order of thing. As a conservative Augier attaches himself more nearly to the literary tradition of the stage, to Molière and the neo-classicists; Dumas *fil*s attaches himself more closely to the popular theater. But both are dramatists of ideas. In dramatizing the ideas of the social animal both withdraw themselves from the world of actual men into the thin air of social doctrine. Each was a master of his craft, and the craft of each was circumscribed within narrow limits. Of the two, Dumas *fil*s had the more enthusiasm, more ability as a pleader, more sweep of feeling; Augier had more observation, more biting wit, a harder edge of characterization. But while Dumas was a reformer, Augier was a stabilizer, accepting conditions as they are and seeking to protect them against attack. He demanded the testing of every new thing. Traditions had been built upon experience. He would not too soon dispossess them. He was as much opposed to the incursions of the new and untried morality of Dumas *fil*s as he was to the excesses of immorality itself.

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*Life and
work of
Augier*

Born Guillaume Victor Emile Augier in 1820, in Valence, France, the dramatist was the grandson of Pigault Lebrun. His life was prosperous and without striking external incident. Belonging to the upper bourgeoisie he did his first writing under the influence of the "school of good sense" by which Ponsard hoped to reintroduce into literature some of the refinements of classicism. Augier's first play was *La Ciguë*, in two acts and in verse, dealing with the death of Socrates. It was not accepted by the Comédie Française, but was played with approval at the Odéon. In all Augier wrote twenty-seven plays, nine of which were in verse and eight in collaboration with other writers. His work was characterized by manliness and self-respect; in almost all of it there is revealed the man of lofty principles who seeks in his work to support the aristocratic standards in which he believes.

In *L'Aventurière*, 1848, there is introduced into an Italian Renaissance setting a plea for the protection of the home against a dangerous woman. In *Gabrielle*, 1849, he pleads the interests of home and husband against the sympathetic lures of unlawful love. In *Le Mariage d'Olympe*, 1855, we have a direct answer to Dumas's *La Dame aux Camélias*. In *La Contagion*, 1866, *Paul Forestier*, 1868, and *Jean de Thommeray*, 1873, the courtesan is held up to observation as the intruder who would destroy the home. In *Les Lionnes pauvres*, 1858, the insidious powers of new lax ideas are shown at work on a young wife. In *Un beau mariage*, 1859, the degenerating powers of money are shown. Augier's greatest works are *Le Gendre de M. Poirier*, 1854, written with M. Jules Sandeau; *Les Effrontés*, 1861; and *Le Fils de Giboyer*, 1862. These are essentially contemporary plays, impelled by

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modern ideas and peopled by characters of city and country life. In them all it was the purpose of the author to show the forces of attack at work on the integrity of the social order.

The Young Germany movement

The drama of ideas of France represented one fashion in which the popular theater of

Scribe was being turned toward a more substantial service of popular causes. The form that resulted was typically French, and it was widely copied in the theater of Europe until the end of the century. But it was not only to the artificial well-made play that the new social ideas were attaching themselves. These ideas were tending to attach themselves as well to the more imaginative conceptions of the romantic poets. If in France the play of ideas was the outgrowth of the popular stage of Scribe, in Germany the earliest social movements of the drama were outgrowths of the bending of the interests of romantic dramatists downward to the concrete issues of everyday life. This was the work of the Young Germany party.

Chief figures

The tendencies deriving from the Young Germany party are manifestly more fundamen-

tal than was the movement toward a drama of ideas in France. Only incidentally was this German movement connected with the theater. German romanticism had come to an end with the July Revolution in Paris in 1830. With the death of Goethe in 1832 there came the end of an era. Thenceforward politics began to mix with poetry, journalism entered the novel, and problems of a contemporary cast entered the theater. Chief among

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the figures of the Young Germany party were Heinrich Heine, Ludwig Börne, Karl Gutzkow, and Heinrich Laube. Of these only the two latter had any relations with the theater, and Laube is remembered rather as a great theater director than as the author of plays. The influence of these men never moves out of Germany, but in Germany their influence is a substantial factor in the later revival which raised the German theater to a position of leadership among the theaters of the world.

Karl Gutzkow (1811-78), novelist and dramatist, opponent of Romanticism, is the author of *Richard Savage*, 1839, *Zopf und Schwert*, 1844, *Das Urbild des Tartüffe*, 1847, *Der Königsleutnant*, 1849, *Uriel Acosta*, 1847. Heinrich Laube (1806-84), dramatist, novelist, and theater director, as a young man joined Gutzkow in revolutionary activities. Later he became artistic director of the Hofburg Theater in Vienna, Leipzig Stadttheater, and Vienna Stadttheater. Comedies: *Rokoko, oder die Alten Herren*, 1846, *Gottshed und Gellert*, 1847, *Die Karlsruhler*, 1847. Not a member of the Young Germany party, Gustav Freytag (1816-95) wrote one comedy with a social slant, *Die Journalisten*, 1853, that holds the stage to this day. Other German playwrights whose tendency toward contemporary social ideas is impressed by the Young Germany movement are Julius Leopold Klein, Franz Dingelstedt, Alfred Meiszner, and A. E. Brachvogel.

*Technique
of the thesis
play*

Like the well-made play of which it was one of the branches, the thesis or problem play soon came to be well standardized. It appeared under various names, the *théâtre utile*, or *militant*, the *pièce à thèse*, the *tendenz* drama, the *problem*, *purpose*,

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or *thesis* play. No purpose would be served by trying to distinguish too finely between forms of these intellectualistic dramas. When it comes to structure we find that the thesis play is as stereotyped as the well-made play, but for different reasons. While the Scribe play responds to the necessities of the plot, the thesis play responds to the necessities of the argument. Every thesis play carried an explicit idea. Soon this idea came to be more important than entertainment, or character. The play which had begun by making men feel became a play to make men think, or think that they were thinking. Plot changed its nature entirely. From a composition of characters bound together by bonds of nature and motive the plot becomes a composition of lay figures bound together to illustrate a social or moral truism. Character, too, changes its quality. The characters of the well-made play had been conventionalized persons. The characters of the thesis play are personified abstractions, or they are animated mouthpieces of the author's ideas. For the purposes of this type of play two orders of character are important:

- (1) The *Confidant*, a character going back to the earliest forms of Classical drama, by which the essential facts of the plot are drawn out for the information of the audience;
- (2) The *Raisonneur*, a lay figure of nineteenth-century invention, whose purpose it is to expound the author's doctrine.

The *Raisonneur* became one of the most useful and hackneyed figures in the theater. First employed, it is said, by one of the disciples of Dumas *fils*, the playwright Théodore Barrière (1823-77), in the figure of Desgenais

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in *Les Filles de Marbre*, the Raisonneur was taken over by Dumas fils himself in Olivier de Jalin in *Le Demi-Monde*, Taupin in *Diane de Lys*, and Barintin in *Les Idées de Madame Aubray*, and became the mainstay of didactic dramatists to the end of the century.

Comment on the drama of ideas Dumas and Augier had introduced into dramatic art a form of play which was to have wide currency in the theater of all nations.

In all essential respects the drama of explicit ideas is a modern form. It neither has a long ancestry, nor is it likely that the form will go far in the future. The employment of the stage for the castigation of the follies of society has the highest authority. It is as old as the comedy of the Greeks and Romans, and it had vital expression in Molière. Dramatic art has never risen higher than that art of comedy in which events and men are subjected to the test of thoughtful laughter. Like comedy it is the purpose of the problem play to employ a particular course of events for throwing a light upon human nature. The difference between comedy and the problem play lies in the manner in which this is done, and in this difference lies the superiority of comedy over the didactic drama. Whatever ends it may serve outside its own structure, comedy is in itself the most concrete, the most specific, the most self-sufficient, of the arts of the theater. It neither generalizes a judgment, states a conclusion, nor depends upon the performance of an extraneous service for its own justification. Through a good comedy one learns to know the world by knowing well a segment of the world. Not so with the problem play. The problem play is not sufficient in itself. Its justification lies

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outside its own structure. In it events are judged, not by their reality, but by their meaning. The play of ideas introduced into playwriting a double set of standards that were confusing both to playwright and to audience. If we consider this form of play solely from the point of view of its value as art, we must conclude that it takes a low place in the history of the stage. No case is recorded in which the problem posed outlived the age that brought it forth. Problem plays have lived, if at all, not on account of their problem or ideas, but on account of their incidental vitality of characterization or the strength of the dramatic action. It is for this reason that Augier, whose ideas are the more conservative, maintains his vitality better than does Dumas. His plays give more truly the impression of character in action.

Historical significance of the play of ideas

But the play of ideas is not in the least to be despised. For in one respect it was of great and beneficial importance in the history of the nineteenth-century theater. This was in the service it performed in the reconciling of the more serious groups of society with the stage. When the century opened, the theater was a decorative and unimportant appendage to the life of the people. The romantic theater served the thinning ranks of the aristocrats. The popular theater entertained the populace of the cities with songs, horse-play, and sensational thrillers. When the century ended, the theater had entered into the interests of the people as a whole. It was on the point of achieving an artistry more diffused and intensive than any known in the history of the stage. The change was in its beginning implemented by the play of ideas. Here

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was a play that was neither elevated above the present interests of life as was the Romantic play, nor frivolous and purely entertaining, as were the plays from the people's theaters. Admittedly it lacked that integrity that fusing of form, substance, and idea that characterize the greatest art. Even while the problem dramatists were capturing the interests of large audiences, other dramatists, chiefly in Germany, were studying the means whereby the same materials could be translated into forms of greater universality and beauty.

More than any other country France has surrendered to the domination of ideas in the theater. This domination continues to this day. To name, therefore, the playwrights who represent ideas would be to call the roll of the French theater for three quarters of a century, including, among many others, Théodore Barrière, Octave Feuillet, Georges Ohnet, Jules Lemaître, Paul Hervieu, Paul Bourget, François de Curel, Brieux, Capus, Donnay, and Lavedan. In Germany, on the other hand, while the cult of ideas has been strong, it has never been so un-mixed as in France. In the German theater the thesis drama is likely to be mingled with some lingering elements of the romantic play. The *tendenz* drama of Germany thus derives from two sources, (1) a surrender to the influence of French drama; (2) the Young Germany movement. The leader of the French school of idea drama was Paul Lindau (1839-1919); other dramatists touched with ideas, in addition to those mentioned above, are Richard Voss, Albert Lindner, Arthur Fitger, Oscar Blumenthal, Felix Philippi, Paul Heyse. During the period in which the drama of ideas was at its height, the theater in England was at a low ebb, suffering from the twin ailments of Puritan morality and acute sentimentalism. Problem plays were written, but in no case was

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the problem adequately treated. Among the playwrights who handled social topics in their plays were Charles Reade, Thomas W. Robertson, Sidney Grundy, Robert Buchanan, John Oxenford, H. V. Esmond, Haddon Chambers, R. C. Carton. In Spain, Italy, and Russia, as we shall see, the treatment of problems was always an engrafting of alien elements on a stock of romantic conventions. In Spain problems of a sort were treated by Manuel Tamayo y Baus, Adelardo Lopéz de Ayala, Eugenio Selles, Leopoldo Cano y Masas, José Filiu y Codina; problems became the stock in trade of Echegaray, Galdós, and Dicenta; in Italy by Paolo Ferrari, Achille Torelli, Giacometti as well as a large number of the imitative dramatists of the end of the century including Giacosa and Bracco; in Russia by Turgenev, Count V. A. Sollogúb, A. A. Potyékhnin, V. A. Krylów, and others.

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CHAPTER FIVE

FORERUNNERS

The new Classicism — Heinrich von Kleist — Franz Grillparzer — Otto Ludwig — Psychological Drama — Friedrich Hebbel — Hebbel and the Modern Theater — Alfred de Musset

Limitations of the play of ideas THE drama of Dumas and Augier had added the element of conscious social purpose to the popular play of Scribe. In this way it had brought the popular play to great vogue and to its highest dignity. It had made it useful to the people and significant as an agency of society. But it had not made it a work of art. No play written in the problem form was significant beyond the value of the idea that was its underlying motive for existence. No problem play had achieved absolute beauty, or a living contribution to truth.

Search for a new form of drama From the days of the old conflict between classicism and romanticism playwrights had been conscious of the desire to identify the pursuit of imaginative beauty with the concrete interests of contemporary life. Though inspired by the passions of modernity, romanticism had departed from the "form and pressure" of everyday experience. And the new popular plays presented at the commercial theaters on the Boulevards offered only the superficial shell of life. What was required was a modern equivalent of the classical play, a form that raised the contemporary event to a universal meaning.

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*The new
classicism*

We have seen that some of the earliest and greatest of the romanticists, notably Goethe and Schiller, had deserted the storm and stress banner in order to seek for a better reconciliation of the spirits of the ancients and the moderns. So it occurs that Goethe, the dramatist of revolt in *Götz von Berlichingen*, lives long enough to be a barrier against the forces of nineteenth-century drama. While France was throwing herself bodily into the popular theater, the poets of Germany were assiduous in their efforts to maintain the formulas of literary drama. And it was in Germany that the most notable efforts were made to combine the methods of the literary theater with a deeper research into the realities of every day.

*Literary
forerunners*

Of the men studied in this chapter the majority are Germans; one is a Frenchman. All allied themselves with the literary traditions of the theater. By main strength they were holding their pens against the popular forces that were sweeping the stage. All paid the price of contemporary neglect. And by the same token all were contributing to the working out of a new art of the theater. Though not generally understood or appreciated in their lifetime, the work of all of them was highly esteemed after their death. While all wrote in the romantic form, the work of each of them had been severely disciplined either by experience or by an intense and realistic imagination.

*Heinrich
von Kleist*

In Heinrich von Kleist we have the first example of the romantic imagination coming to grips with the realistic consciousness of the modern world.

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In every sense of the word, both as artist and citizen, Kleist was a participant in the life of his time. So thoroughly did he identify himself with the spirit of his age that his sense of personal responsibility outran his powers. To this fact the tragedy of his life is due. To this is due as well that form of drama that makes itself a burning symbol of the age. Kleist is the first to whom the term "contemporary" can be applied with the meaning that it carries to-day. Kleist was born in 1777 and died by his own hand in 1811. Two of his plays, *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, and *Die Hermannsschlacht*, are of importance for the intensity of the author's self-identification with the sufferings of Germany. But Kleist is chiefly remembered for his little play *Der zerbrochene Krug*, 1811, a comedy that anticipates later drama in so many features that it might be called the first contemporary play. This play is a genre piece of a Dutch order of artistry, compact, balanced, and instinct with observation and comedy. It is the first example of what in later times is called the static play, an impassive, half-ironic "composition" in clean-cut motive and action. Kleist's best-known plays in addition to those mentioned are *Die Familie Schroffenstein*, 1803, *Penthesilia*, 1808, and *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, 1808.

Franz Grill- In the intense and melancholic genius of
parzer Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872), the leading dramatic poet of Austria, are many elements that point toward the modern theater. These were combined with, or rather submerged in, qualities that stamp him as essentially a child of his time. Of the order of drama which inheres in the powerful will, the self-evaluating judg-

ment, Grillparzer had no conception. He was therefore peculiarly qualified to be the last of the great Classicists of the European drama. If Grillparzer bowed to an imperious classical view of life, it was from no regard for convention. It was because his sense of life persuaded him of the existence of overruling powers, and because he was a worshiper of heroic beauty. In his tragedy, Classical though it is, there are traces of the intense soul crises that occur again in the work of the more essentially "modern" dramatists, Hebbel, Ibsen, Hauptmann, Strindberg, and even Wedekind. Grillparzer began his career as a "Fate dramatist" with the immensely popular *Die Ahnfrau*, 1817. In his plays he deals more than once with the "upset equilibriums" of life, though usually treating historical or legendary themes in an elevated fashion. There are in his works evidences of a modern realistic power in the deploying of characters and events. His psychology is worthy of the greatest of modern dramatists. All of Grillparzer's works save two are tragedies that end in death. Only one, *Weh' dem, der lügt*, 1838, was a comedy. Midway in his career, because of the lack of recognition of his work, Grillparzer absented himself from the stage. He continued, however, to write plays, several of which were published after his death.

In addition to the plays mentioned above, Grillparzer's chief plays are *Sappho*, 1818, *Das goldene Vliess*, a trilogy, 1821, *König Ottokar's Glück und Ende*, 1823, *Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn*, 1826, *Das Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*, 1831, *Der Traum ein Leben*, 1834, and the posthumously published plays, *Die Jüdin von Toledo* and *Ein Bruderkzwist im Hause Habsburg*.

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Otto Ludwig, Like Kleist and Grillparzer, Otto Ludwig 1813-65 was something of a tragic figure. His creative life was spent in a continual unrealized search for more veritable forms of dramatic expression. Had he appeared a little later his powers of realistic imagination and psychological insight would have found free and profitable outlet. As it occurred, he was always just a little at war with himself and his time. His composition was rendered slow by an overconscientiousness, by exaggerated speculation in matters of form, and by the desire to reach more deeply into the dramatic essence of his plots. Ludwig was aware of the tendencies of the new dramaturgy, but was too much bound to the old to reach his own ideal. In spite of a sensational manner of treatment, *Der Erbförster*, 1850, is a psychological drama of epoch-making quality. In *Die Makkabäer*, 1852, Ludwig applies the same methods of psychological detail to an historical subject.

Psychological drama Through the works of these playwrights some clear tendencies were in operation. The playwrights were perhaps not aware of the fact, certainly their contemporaries were not, but they were, each in his own way, seeking to plant dramatic action more deeply and firmly upon the principles of human psychology. When we speak of modern dramatic psychology we do not mean to imply that there has been any important change in the human mind. Nor do we mean to imply that the laws of the theater have changed. We mean simply that after a long period, during which drama had been alienated from the empirical study of human nature, playwrights began to work their way back toward

human traits and qualities as the essential sources of dramatic art. The man who brought these tendencies to culmination was Friedrich Hebbel.

*The new
problem of
Fate*

The problem that Hebbel as a dramatist faced, and largely contributed to solve, was the old question of the relation, in the art of the theater, of the individual with his environment. It was the question of Fate come to life again in a new and more perplexing form. Playwrights had of course found that a world of unrestrained and universal free will was unthinkable. Such a theory was against experience; it gave no scope to drama. A world of free will would offer but a confusion of wills; a *mélange* of mischances. In any such world drama would disappear. Faced by the necessity of placing the individual will in its environment the romantic playwrights had invented a villain, which they had identified with the upper classes, the nobles, or the king. With the coming of democracy a new villain had been created which they had identified with Society itself. Dramatic history reveals thousands of plays in which the individual is shown in conflict with the compact will of his fellows, or with the representatives of this will in the form of family, religious, or social tradition. The theme of Imprisoned Will, or Society the Villain, provides the action of misanthropic melodramas, and special pleading problem plays, until the end of the century. But it, too, is not in accord with the facts. What is this Society that acts against the individual will? What is its source? How is it constituted? A little thought shows that Society cannot be put into opposition to men because Society itself is but an abstraction. If

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oppositions occur — and they do occur — they do not take place between outer and inner forces. They take place between forces both of which have lodgment within the individual. Every real drama is an individual drama. This idea of the individual himself as the seat of all oppositions did much to particularize and to intensify the action of plays. It narrowed the scene of action to the individual mind. In this conception we have the roots of the psychological play, a play that in many respects partakes of the qualities of Greek tragedy. In the genesis of the psychological play Hebbel had a large part.

Sketch of Hebbel's life and works

Friedrich Hebbel was born in 1813 in Holstein while this was Danish territory. The son of a brickmason, he suffered extreme poverty in his youth and his work always displays a high sensitiveness to the sufferings of the poor. Coming under the protection of Amalie Schoppe, a popular authoress, he sojourned successively in Hamburg, at Heidelberg, and at Munich, attending the universities in the latter places for a time but not finishing the course. Hebbel conceived himself to be pointed by destiny to great work; as a consequence he accepted freely the self-sacrificing devotion of friends, both men and women. His first play, *Judith*, produced in Hamburg and Berlin in 1840, struck a new note in passionate psychological drama. To an old story he had attached motives that were essentially modern and new. He continued this strain in *Genoveva*, 1840, in his "tragedy of common life" *Maria Magdalene*, 1844, and in his following works. Being established by the success of his plays and by the

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generosity of friends in comfortable circumstances, he broke with old associations, visited Paris and Vienna, and married a popular actress. His best work lies in tragedy in which passion and psychological analysis mingle. Of his comedies *Der Diamant*, 1847, is the best known. Hebbel died in 1863.

Hebbel's best works in addition to those named above are *Ein Trauerspiel in Sizilien*, 1845, *Herodes und Mariamne*, 1850, *Julia*, 1851, *Michel Angelo*, 1851, *Agnes Bernauer*, 1855, *Gyges und sein Ring*, 1856, and *Die Nibelungen*, a trilogy, 1862.

Hebbel as a playwright By many critics Hebbel is considered to be the prophet and herald of the drama of Ibsen, Strindberg, and Hauptmann. Overloaded as it is with exaggerations his work possesses that indispensable quality of psychological validity found only in the greatest dramas. What is meant by such validity may be seen by comparing Hebbel's rock-hewn structure with the airy and unreal fabrications of Dumas and Augier. The situations of Dumas and Augier are at the best but situations of the theater. Hebbel's situations are planted in character and his characters are identified with universal human nature. He turned the interest of the theater away from the external and superficial, even from the declamatory and rhapsodic, to the deeper strains of motive and passion that urge both action and speech. His plots were in some respects strained; he put his characters under heavy pressure of circumstance and temptation, and then proceeded to observe the soul movements under this pressure. He was fearless in analysis. His exposition amounted almost to exposure. He anticipated Ibsen in

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respecting and in contending for the integrity of individual human character.

*Hebbel as
self-
critic*

Naturally enough Hebbel was aware of his own aims and of the differences between his own methods and the methods of the romantic dramatists and the makers of problem plays. For this reason his personal memoirs are illuminating on the processes of dramatic creation. One of the most suggestive passages in the critical interpretation of an author's method is found in Hebbel's *Diary* when he speaks of the effect upon his mind of Uhland's poem *Des Sängers Fluch*. He had, he tells us, been well satisfied to imitate Schiller, and to reflect in his works the threadbare doubts and thrills of writers now dead. And then Uhland took him into the depths of the human heart, revealed to him that only in human pain can one reach the heart of nature, revealed to him the illusory value of reflection, purified his mind of preconception and prejudice, until his art came to rest upon the simply human. It was from Uhland that he learned that the artist must prepare himself for his work; that he cannot write what he does not know; that the poet must not "write into nature but out from it"; that when one knows the individual human soul in all its depths and complexities he knows the infinite.

*Hebbel and
the modern
theater*

The ideas of Hebbel sound obvious enough to-day. That should not blind us to the fact that they were epoch-making when they were written and that they expound, not his work alone, but the modern theater as a whole. Hebbel's plays contain the first sketches of the themes of the greatest of

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psychological playwrights since his day. In *Judith* we have the first modern psychological drama, a tragedy that inaugurates a century of intense study of the relations between the will of man and society. The vengeance of Judith upon Holophernes is not motivated in the spirit of the Apocrypha as a matter alone of heroic self-sacrifice. The motives of the woman and the patriot are mingled. There is in this play more than a hint of the new issue between man and woman which was to be such a fruitful theme for drama throughout the century. Like Ibsen, who owed him many a debt, Hebbel identified with the problems of womanhood many of the most pressing problems of personal freedom. Again he forecast the enfranchised woman of later drama in *Mariamne* of *Herodes und Mariamne*. In *Maria Magdalene* there is no connection with the Biblical story save in the fact that Clara is a fallen woman. What the author does is to study the woman in the midst of the environment of middle-class tyranny and bigotry. *Genoveva* also changes an old legend to treat it by a new psychology. In *Ein Trauerspiel in Sizilien* we have a first draft of that tragedy of marital maladjustment which is to provide so fruitful a theme for later playwrights. Of all Hebbel's plays *Agnes Bernauer* is most identified with an abstract idea. Alone among his plays, this play illustrates a psychological idea. But the idea is identified with the action. It does not, as in the plays of Dumas, ride the action.

Retrospective analysis Hebbel was essentially a modern in identifying a play with a "fundamental motive." In his view ideas are the "soul of the action." But there

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is a wide difference between the fundamental motive of Hebbel's drama and the extrinsic ideas of Dumas. In Hebbel the ideas themselves are the propulsive forces of the drama. They are not doctrines, opinions that serve as counters in light conversation. They are obsessions, deep-rooted passions, hereditary inclinations of mind that are clung to even to monomania. They drive the characters beyond their wills, and against their wills. Because Hebbel was one of the first to treat his characters as at the same time responsible and irresponsible, obligated and helpless, he was one of the first to recognize the place in drama of that complex environment woven of external pressures and internal inhibitions that conditions human fate. Among the Greeks Fate came from the Gods, of whom there could be no question. In Hebbel Fate comes from man and nature; of it there is eternal question and never answer. Like Ibsen who came after him Hebbel was but slightly interested in actions; he was deeply interested in the motives that were the springs of action. As a consequence of his particular manner of viewing the world and of his employment of implanted mental traits as the source of his action, Hebbel was the first modern dramatist to employ that system of "analytical retrospection" that was the mainstay of Greek tragedy. This form came to its modern perfection in the work of Ibsen.

Alfred de Musset More a forerunner than any of the above in that he had to wait longer for his peculiar interests to be generally accepted was the French Alfred de Musset. In his art Musset did not pretend to give expression to the contemporary motive, or to uncover the profounder ranges of human experience. Few writers:

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have done more, however, to adapt the form of the literary drama to the requirements of the new age. Musset attached himself directly to the romantic school. But he was conscious of the shortcomings of romanticism. Like Goethe and Schiller, Grillparzer and Hebbel, he too sought for a manner of reconciling classical dignity and suavity with romantic color and adventure. He sought for a "third school which should unite the merits of each." Musset recognized that there are two methods by which the imagination may be controlled. The one is the method of logical discipline; the other is the method of æsthetic discipline. From the former the drama of naturalism grew. The latter developed into the light and care-free orders of fantasy which says, "All these are but fancies, let us deal with them gracefully." One does not need to say that it was not Musset's way that was first accepted by the nineteenth century. During the long vogue of naturalism the plays of Musset occupied a very small place in the traditions of the stage. But as the new century approached, the number who followed him began to increase.

*Musset
as pre-
cursor*

In many respects Alfred de Musset, both in beliefs and practice, was prophetic of the art of later times. He believed thoroughly in the duality of nature of the modern man, and in his plays employs this conception in the creation of his plots. And he believed that men are of two types, the men of sensitivity and the men of matter. Between these two classes there could be no traffic. They belonged to different worlds. For this reason he had no interest in the drama of ideas that sought to remake men through their

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minds. He was willing to wait until men remade themselves through their instincts and tastes. This brings us to the second respect in which Musset anticipates later dramatic theory. After the failure of his first play he determined never again to write for the crude and unresponsive machine of the modern stage. Only by freeing himself from external impediments could his fancy be kept free. He is therefore the earliest exemplar of the modern doctrine that the play is complete as a work of art in the mind of the creator and before production and that a dynamic conception will eventually create its own mechanism of expression. The belated recognition of Musset's work is abundant evidence of the validity of his faith. In our day the best strains of fantastic drama in Spain, Hungary, and Austria, as well as in France, owe debts to Musset.

Musset's first play, *La nuit vénitienne*, 1830, was not successful in production. Musset therefore determined to write his remaining plays for the armchair. In his work the romanticism of Shakespeare combines with the delicacies of the eighteenth century. Chief plays: *André del Sarto*, 1833, *Les Caprices de Marianne*, 1833, *Fantasio*, 1834, *Lorenzaccio*, 1834, *On ne badine pas avec l'amour*, 1835, *Il ne faut jurer de rien*, 1836, *Un Caprice*, 1837, *Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée*, 1845, *Carmosine*, 1850, *Bettine*, 1851, all the above dates those of publication. Musset's acceptance on the French stage began in 1847 with the production of *Un Caprice*.

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CHAPTER SIX

HENRIK IBSEN

Scandinavian Drama — Björnstjerne Björnson — Life of Ibsen — Poetic Period — Transition — Prose Period — Dramatist and Citizen of the World — A Revaluer of Values — Ibsen and Ideals — The Woman Question — Ibsen as a Playwright — World Influence

In Chief European Dramatists:

Et Dukkehjem, by Henrik Ibsen, translated as *A Doll's House* by William Archer.

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, First Series:

Over Ævne, I, by Björnstjerne Björnson, translated as *Beyond Human Power* by Lee M. Hollander.

*Drama in
the mid-
century*

IN the development of the modern theater until the middle of the nineteenth century few efforts had been made to challenge the domination of France. The Romantic movement which had come from England, Spain, and Germany had been but an interlude between the dominance of French classicism and the far more widespread dominance of the French well-made play. Only in Germany had serious efforts been made to create a drama on a deeper spiritual and artistic basis. Throughout the century the theater of Germany contributed to the world stage a spirit of restless experiment, vacillating between romanticism and a searching and poignant realism. Dubious as were the qualities of the drama in France and Germany, they were far in advance of anything to be found outside these countries. Throughout the mid-century the theater of England was in general beneath contempt; the theaters of Spain and Italy were provincial or derivative; the Russian theater had not yet entered the European arena.

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Emergence of Scandinavian drama At the moment when it appeared that French domination would end in the dry rot of the European theater there came a challenge from an unexpected quarter. It has been noticed that the theater is one of the readiest of international forces. This international quality is not inconsistent with an intense local quality. Frequently throughout the nineteenth century the emergence of a nation into high national consciousness has first been evidenced in its theater. Such an emergence was seen in the theater of Germany, of Bohemia, of Hungary, and of Ireland. Such a growth of national consciousness occurred in Norway, and the fruits of it were the plays of Björnson and Ibsen. The movement which resulted in remaking the theater of the world began as a local movement for the glorification of a little people.

State of the Norwegian theater Mother Hubbard's cupboard was not more bare than was the stage of Norway in 1850. The only plays written in Norwegian for half a century had been the lyrical dramas of Wergeland and the religious dramas of Andreas Munch. Some of the reasons for this sterility lie in the control maintained over Scandinavian drama by the Danish stage. All the forces of literary tradition and social convention had been employed to enforce this control. The chief theater of Scandinavia was the Royal Theater at Copenhagen; this was governed by J. L. Heiberg, a satrap of the Scribe régime in Paris. The only great dramatists of Scandinavian tradition were Danes. Holberg, the Danish Molière, and Oehlenschläger, the Danish Shakespeare, were the classics of this tradition. Any proposal for a

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Norwegian theater was looked upon as treason to these; it was treason also to that governing class that derived all its ideas from Denmark. So little independent literary life did Norway have that until the twentieth century Norwegian books, and this includes the works of Ibsen, were not published in Christiania, but in Copenhagen.

Beginnings of the Nor- wegian theater

In 1849 Ole Bull, the famous violinist, returned to Norway from a tour of America determined to inaugurate a Norwegian theater. As the seat of this enterprise he selected the small town of Bergen, to the theater of which he guaranteed a small fund. By a series of those chances that enliven the book of history the two men upon whom he first called for aid in the carrying out of his project were Henrik Ibsen and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, both boys just out of their teens. From Bergen the movement was to spread to Christiania. These two young men kept in touch with its growth. Bjørnson was triumphantly to arouse that spirit of proud nationalism at which the great musician aimed. And Ibsen was to overleap the boundaries of nationalism in creating an international drama of ideas.

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, poet, dramatist, novelist, statesman, and man of affairs, was born in 1832, at Kvikne in North Norway, the son of a pastor in a bleak district. Graduated from Christiania University in 1852 he turned immediately to a busy life in journalism, poetic composition, and the writing of novels and stories. His first serious efforts were the peasant tales, *Synnöve Solbakken*, 1857, and *Arne*, 1858, in which he pre-

sented "the peasant in the light of old Sagas, and the Sagas in the light of modern peasant life." Björnson's association with the theater began with his service as director of the Bergen Playhouse in 1857-59, following the incumbency of Ibsen in the same post; from 1865 to 1867 Björnson was associated with the Christiania theater in a like capacity. His first plays were romantic works glorifying the history of Norway. Distributed among his other work of lecturing, traveling, and novel-writing, Björnson's playwriting extends throughout his career, but never takes a dominant place in his life. Never entirely successful as a playwright, he wrote some plays that gained an extraordinary local popularity, and was influential in establishing the drama of Norway. He started his prose playwriting under the influence of the Scribe school as modified by the drama of ideas of Dumas. He is more fundamentally a thinker than Dumas, but not so expert in theater-craft. His themes range over the problems of his age, treating the powers and evils of journalism, the problems of the moral and the domestic life, the powers of money in affairs, sex relations, and the moral law. In *Over Ævne, Part I*, he reaches the heights of his playwriting, and one of the pinnacles of the modern theater, in his dramatization of the factor of mystical faith in human affairs. Björnson had all the qualities to make him complementary to Ibsen. While Ibsen sequestered himself, Björnson entered fully into the life of his time. Ibsen spoke to his time only through the theater; the theater was to Björnson but one of many agencies of expression. He was a public man concerned in public affairs; he was a politician and national leader. He had the gift of success, was lusty, optimistic, knew the high roads of

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destiny, was fecund of ideas, enthusiasms, and generosity. For a long time it appeared that he was going to rise to greater heights than Ibsen. But he lacked the latter's all-powerful intellect; he lacked his powers of absorption and concentration. And so, while in many ways he leads Ibsen, and in temporal matters gives him the strength of his arm, he cannot accompany him all the way. In the research of the deeper places of the soul Ibsen goes on alone.

Björnson's chief dramatic works are *Mellem Slagene*, 1857, *Halte Hulda*, 1858, *Kong Sverre*, 1861, *Sigurd Slembe*, 1862, *Maria Stuart i Skotland*, 1864, in verse; and the following plays in prose: *De Nygifte*, 1865, *Redaktören*, 1874, *En Fallit*, 1874, *Kongen*, 1877, *Leonardo*, 1879, *Det nye System*, 1879, *En Hanske*, 1883, *Over Ævne, Part I*, 1883, *Part II*, 1895, *Geografi og Kjaerlighed*, 1885, *Laboremus*, 1901, *Naar den ny Vin blomstrer*, 1909.

Life of Henrik Ibsen

The facts of Ibsen's life can be quickly summarized. Born Henrik Johan Ibsen, March 20, 1828, at the seaport town of Skien on the south coast of Norway, of Scotch, Danish, and German descent, young Ibsen's early years were spent in penury. When he was fifteen years of age his family moved to Grimstad, a town of only eight hundred inhabitants, which seems to have had an effect not inappropriate to its name in giving a somber hue to the young poet's mind. In 1850 he went to Christiania to prepare to enter the University. It was in the following year that, as a result of an encounter with Ole Bull, he was called to be theater poet of the newly established and modest Norwegian Theater at Bergen. There Ibsen remained until 1857, his

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stay broken by a few weeks' tour in Copenhagen and Dresden for the study of the art of the theater. In 1857 he returned to Christiania, where he remained until 1864, acting for a portion of this period as theater poet of the Norwegian Theater in Christiania. Securing a grant from the University of Christiania, the young poet in 1862 made a tour for researches among the peoples of the coast districts. Ibsen had been writing plays since his Grimstad days. Several of his early experiments had been produced at Bergen. After his return to Christiania he devoted himself actively to writing. The early reception of his plays was not such as to satisfy his aggressive and inquiring mind. When after many efforts he obtained a traveling stipend, he was glad to leave Norway. His way led to Rome, and now begins the mature period of his creative life. Thenceforward he was for a dozen years in effective exile, living successively in Rome, Munich, and Dresden. But by 1875 Ibsen's European fame was established. He now returned to Christiania, where he lived the remainder of his life. Ibsen died in 1906. He was supremely the man of the theater. He never wrote a biography, a work of erudition, or a preface to his plays. He never established a theater, engaged in public affairs, or entered business.

Early influences and character

Few careers in history are more the products of self-imposed regimen than was that of Ibsen. As a young man he did not escape the radical emotions of 1848. But he was never again a revolutionary or even a liberal in political associations. He was aware of, and responded to, the ideas and influences of the narrow world of Norway, as expressed in the work

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of Camilla Collett, Nicolai Frederik Grudtvig, and Søren Aaby Kierkegaard; and from the larger world he was acquainted with the ideas of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Carlyle, Taine, and John Stuart Mill. But these were the most random mental contacts, the passing signals between natures essentially diverse. They could not be called influences. From the beginning to the end of his life Ibsen was an individualist. He trusted supremely his own processes; he sought his own mental ends. Naturally he did not come by his method at once, but his native qualities are discernible at the beginning. As he proceeded his qualities of honesty, courage, and independence were only tempered and hardened and made more useful by contact with the world. He was entirely without illusions; he had no enthusiasm but for integrity. He cared nothing for innovations for their own sakes. The new he valued precisely as he valued the old, by test of quality. He discarded panaceas, slogans, and the politic idea that a half loaf is better than no bread. Such was Ibsen in his mind. And Ibsen the dramatist could never be distinguished from Ibsen the man. To him the theater was the trying-ground of experience. It was here that doctrines were precipitated into action. It was characteristic of the man who, more than any other, was the re-creator of the modern stage that in social thinking he tended away from romantic liberalism toward a satiric and sometimes harsh scrutiny of all enthusiasms and facile formulas; that as a playwright he contributed nothing new to the forms of dramas. Perfect the old forms he did; he intensified them, clarified them, applied them to the handling of fundamental themes. Like Shaw he had no respect for novelty of form for its own

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sake. He was pressed into new forms only by necessity; his adventuring was always held by the close leash of logic; he never soared in fancy, or broke through old forms into new codes of expression as did Strindberg. As a young man he had read the great classics of the drama, Oehlenschläger, Shakespeare, Goethe, and the Greeks. During his Bergen days he became thoroughly acquainted with the dramaturgy of the Scribe school. These influences supplied the raw materials of his technique.

Ibsen's first period Ibsen published his first play in 1850; his last play was published just fifty years later. During this half-century Ibsen covered a wide gamut of dramatic composition. In the first half of his career he was a romantic dramatist, treating in verse and by free imaginative methods generalized conceptions from history and legend. In the second half of his career he was the realist bending an intense and pointed regard upon the facts of daily life. The first period of Ibsen's dramatic authorship extends from 1850 to about 1875, and is itself divided into two phases. In the first phase he was the young experimenter trying his prentice hand at the writing of plays in the fashion of the masters of poetic drama.

Ibsen's first play, *Katilina*, 1850, was a revolutionary drama inspired by the events of 1848, and owing some debt to Goethe and Oehlenschläger; after the manner of Oehlenschläger was also *The Warrior's Tomb*, 1850. *St. John's Night*, 1853, was inspired by the young poet's interest in folk lore, and is dimly reminiscent of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. *Lady Inger of Östraat*, 1855, is a romantic play in the Scribe manner falsifying the facts of

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Norwegian history. The two following plays, *The Feast at Solhaug*, 1856, and *Olaf Liljekrans*, 1856, are both indebted to the influence of the Danish poet Henrik Hertz, and represent the application of the ballad to dramatic purposes. The experimental period of Ibsen's career comes to an end with the composition of *The Warriors of Helgeland*, 1858.

Second phase of Ibsen's first period

All of the plays mentioned above had been written during Ibsen's Bergen days while his fiery and aspiring genius had been working amid the utmost poverty of inspiration and resources. As a result few of them display much of interest. Of them all *Lady Inger of Östraat* excels in possessing the most vivid imagination. From now on the expanding processes of Ibsen's mind and art can be followed clearly. In Bergen he had married, he had endured poverty, he had discovered the force of the impact of his mind against the minds around. And the Bergen experience had come to an end. In 1857 he had returned to the wider life of Christiania, there to spend seven years. Though Christiania opened a wider world to him, it was not to bring him contentment. Throughout his Christiania sojourn Ibsen was conscious of a growing spirit of resentment and disillusion which hardened into active disapproval of the governing tenets of society. The naturalistic revolt against the Danish literary tradition was in the air. This revolt Ibsen subscribed to. From this time on personal attitudes and opinions take an ever larger place in Ibsen's writings. When he leaves Norway and goes to Rome, he begins to pour forth in his plays a torrent of eloquence in which uncompro-

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mising judgments in matters of conscience are combined with an almost evangelical faith in the spiritual values of life.

Poetic Plays

As a result of the larger injections of personal stamina in his work, Ibsen's plays of this second phase of the first period take on a significance far beyond the experimental work of his youthful phase. The first play definitely to show this advance is *Hærmændene paa Helgeland* (*The Warriors of Helgeland*), an experiment in rendering a saga directly into dramatic form. In this play there is a note of ethical speculation expressed in a vigorous dramaturgy that had something of the quality of Hebbel and Wagner. Ibsen's disgust with the narrow associations of his home was intensified by the refusal of this play both by the Christiania Theater and by the Royal Theater at Copenhagen. In Ibsen's next play, *Kjærlighedens Komædie* (*Love's Comedy*), 1862, there are evidences of the hardening of his interests and the pointing of his method. Unlike any of his previous work this play deals with an intimate and domestic theme. In its underlying ideas Ibsen had been influenced by his friend Camilla Collett, but his satirical method was all his own. After first sketching the play in prose, Ibsen finished it in verse. As in the case of the previous play its public reception was not happy. There are signs that Ibsen's mind is beginning to turn inward in some bitterness of spirit. These evidences of an inner searching are borne out in his next play, *Kongsemnerne* (*The Pretenders*), 1864. The title of this play literally means "the stuff from which Kings are made." Again under the guise of an old story the author is dealing with contemporary

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themes. He is searching now for that source of civic strength that lies at the heart of the strong man. He based his idea on the figures of Thordsson's old saga *Haakon Haakonsson's Saga*, in which the self-reliant and shallow Haakon, the hesitant but wise Skule, are shown in opposition. In such an opposition the apparent advantage is on the side of Haakon. In this play there is more than a hint of the relative positions at the time of Björnson and Ibsen. The play was produced at the Christiania Theater in 1864. In it Ibsen reaches maturity. There is in it much of the passion and command, the individual method in free flow, that are found later in *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*.

Brand,
1866 With *The Pretenders* we come to the end of Ibsen's Norwegian period. In his succeeding plays there are to be found, it is to be admitted, traces of the compounding of private resentments with civic idealisms. Ibsen the man is never to be isolated from the inspired prophet, the scourger of sins. But though a knowledge of the man is necessary to an understanding of his plays, these are far more than dramatizations of the man's resentments. Ibsen had locked himself in his age. When he writes he writes for his times. It is only a nervous quiver that reveals that when he is writing for his times he is also speaking for himself. After he had reached Rome, Ibsen wrote *Brand*. In this he pours forth all his philosophy. *Brand* is the idealized figure of a strong and simple spirit who faces the world, and by this one means particularly the world of the North, alone in the strength of the spirit. There are reflections in him of the religious philosophy of Kierkegaard; even more

there are reflections of Ibsen's ideal man set in that bleak northern scenery that now in Italy must have been so clear to his mind's eye. *Brand* was written at white heat. "I wanted," he wrote, "a metre in which I could career as I would, as on horseback." It remains to this day the most extended and significant burst of inspiration of modern European drama. Written in 1865, near Rome, and published in 1866 at Copenhagen, it marks the beginning of Ibsen's acceptance by Scandinavia and the establishment of his European fame.

Peer Gynt, 1867 In *Brand*, Ibsen had poured forth his beliefs in an inspiring flood. The work is eloquent, lyrical; it is a rhetorical feat of first magnitude. But only by the loosest interpretation can it be considered a theater play. Behind the lyrical outbursts of the wisely mystical priest the whole range of character and action, clashing and interacting motive, are concealed. The active world that is implied in the play is never raised to the level of the play's surface. It is this active world that Ibsen treats in his next play, *Peer Gynt*. In *Peer Gynt*, Ibsen wished to show the kind of character the world in its heedlessness had made. The general conception of the play is as immense as that of *Brand*. He is writing a tract for the times. So *Peer Gynt* is a kind of generalized figure, a modern Don Quixote, who sums up in a symbol the generality of mankind. *Peer Gynt* is an adventurer, a charlatan, a good-natured fellow, a mountebank, a man of "imperial" imagination, a snob, and a pathetic figure. In respect of dramaturgy the play is a dramatic masterpiece. For the origin of the fantastic realism of *Peer Gynt* one must look to Asbjørnsen's *Nor-*

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wegian Fairy Tale Book; but the characters and scenic background are from life itself.

Kejser og Galilæer Before he came to the parting of the ways which was to lead him into a new form of drama, Ibsen spent some years in completing a work which he had long been contemplating. *Kejser og Galilæer* (*Emperor and Galilean*), 1873, is the most ambitious of Ibsen's works. It cannot be regarded as one of his most successful. Dealing with the career of Julian the Apostate in two parts (*Cæsar's Apostasy*, and *The Emperor Julian*), Ibsen was intent upon giving an adequate dramatic representation of a great spiritual and intellectual crisis in history. The representation is marvelously just to the two great conceptions concerned; the profoundly philosophical materials are handled with power and dramatic fervor. Nevertheless it is a theme that better belongs in a book of philosophy than in a play. The play is interesting to us chiefly as the first case in which Ibsen employed prose in a dramatic composition.

Transition to the prose play By 1875 Ibsen was a famous man. His influence had spread over Europe. While his great works, *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, were not readily adaptable to theatric production, they had made the author known as a trenchant and tonic force in ideas as well as an innovating influence in the theater. And yet at this period Ibsen must have had a feeling of repression of powers. It must have appeared to him that for a man of his dynamic genius he had in fact failed to secure the extended hearing that was his due. He had failed of the broadest influence because the form in which

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he had been working was removed from the common interests of the busy world. He had been employing the traditional forms of the old theater. As a result his best plays had been limited to reading in the study. He had failed to reach the many who crowded the popular theater because he had failed to treat life in the only way in which they knew it, in terms of daily problems, events, sensations. To any one who has followed the course of Ibsen's plays it is manifest that a change was necessary. He had begun to suspect the validity of explicit ideas. He had come to require the validity of the event.

Preparations for change This change had been long in preparation. The central feature of the change lay in the precipitation of Ibsen's interests from the distant and the general to the near and concrete. This does not mean that he ceased to be interested in general problems of conscience and of mental perplexity. It means simply that it had now come to him, as in a revelation, that there is but one aspect in which these matters are relevant to man, and that is in the concrete aspect. It is only in concrete cases that one can study a problem of conscience. It came to him, too, that no purpose is served in writing above the heads of men or to a selected few. In a letter written in 1865, Ibsen had said that while the versified form with the symbolic behind it is his most natural mode of expression he cannot avoid striking with hard hands. Increasingly he had been striking with hard hands. Ibsen's playwriting was changing from that verbal form which reveals itself through words to the form dictated by action and character. For such a drama he had models in the well-made play of Scribe, and in the problem play

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of Dumas. And eventually the pressure came from nearer home. As early as 1868 Björnson had urged Ibsen to practice "photography by comedy." And in that very year he had given himself up to a new type of experiment. In 1868 Ibsen left Rome, where he had written *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, and went to South Bavaria, thence to Munich, and thence to Dresden. There he wrote *De Unges Forbund* (*The League of Youth*). The play was produced in 1869 in Christiania. It is significant for many reasons. It is Ibsen's first specific attack against provincialisms, and the impediments set up by the narrow view against the liberalizing power of truth. And it is the first play in which Ibsen employs the formulas of Scribe in the composition of a play of ideas. The play was not entirely successful. Considered by Ibsen a peaceable work, it offended the liberal parties of Norway and Björnson in particular. And its appeal is too local, it is too mordant with a specific satire, to be popular elsewhere.

*Ibsen's
second
period*

The League of Youth is Ibsen's first experiment toward the method that brought him his greatest influence. It is not, however, until seven years later, in 1875, that his second or prose period may be said to begin. In this period, too, we find two phases. In the first the dramatist is a social philosopher, concerned with the relations of men and women in the social compact. In the second and final phase he refers all his interests back to their sources in the individual human soul. Ibsen had returned to Norway in 1874. Thence he went to Munich and started a play in a new fashion which was in 1877 issued as *Samfundet's*

Støtter, or Pillars of Society. In plot *Pillars of Society* had some resemblance to the "accusatory" drama that was the outgrowth of the revolutionary play of romanticism. It differed from the "accusatory" play in that charges are leveled not so much against a class as against the ideas that rule society. These false ideas are the "pillars of society." In spite of its audacity, and some pungency of social criticism, *Pillars of Society* is now seen to be pretty much a machine-made product. Mechanically the play derives directly from Scribe. It belongs with the plays of Augier and Dumas, though differing from these in the author's power to see through his subject. Whereas Augier would protect society against the impostors who would break in upon the social structure, and Dumas would protect the unfortunate against society, Ibsen inquires why there are impostors and unfortunates and answers that it is because the governing ideas of society are rotten. *Pillars of Society* immediately attracted great attention, particularly in Germany and Austria.

Et Dukkehjem, 1879 Ibsen's second play of this period showed a great advance over any of his previous work. This advance was evidenced first in the intellectual integrity in which the work was conceived. This quality was of course immediately reflected in the technique of the play. *A Doll's House* is epoch-making in that it is the first work of modern times in which the woman is shown as completely competent, self-knowing, self-governing, and endowed with right reason. Appropriately enough the play deals with the shocks by which woman is awakened to these qualities. The play marked

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a milestone in Ibsen's own conceptions as well, for until this time he had held the sentimental view of the abnegatory woman that was current at the time. In discovering a newly enfranchised woman, Ibsen had found a figure to free not alone her kind, but to free mankind as a whole and the theater as well. Ibsen treated Nora with great sympathy and understanding. He must, however, be absolved from sentimental gynolatry. He was interested in Nora as a human being who was struggling toward responsibility and independence. *A Doll's House* is particularly interesting as showing Ibsen's technique in transition. Until the middle of the third act the play is a typical Scribe play with confidante and villain and sensational scene. At this point the liberating power of ideas seizes Nora and in her hands the play becomes a rational document of constructive social doctrine.

Gjenganger, 1881

Few plays in history have caused the discussion occasioned by *A Doll's House*. The play met with storms of disapproval and an even more discouraging and stupid misunderstanding. It was this disapproval and misunderstanding that led Ibsen to look further into the subjects considered in the play. He had treated Nora as a person upon whom only one destiny depended. But independent as she was Nora did not, could not, stand absolutely alone. Upon her there depended the lives and happiness of innocent beings. In *Ghosts* Ibsen levels his charges directly against those who refuse to face the facts of human responsibility. In showing the results of a woman's slavery to false convention being carried on into the next generation, Ibsen reveals that something more is dependent upon individual

integrity than the happiness of the individual. The solidarity of society rests upon individual integrity.

En Folkefiende, 1882 In *An Enemy of the People* we have an interlude, almost a comedy note, introduced between Ibsen's more serious studies. It was as if he interrupted his more intense application to his task to speak for himself as author and to drive home upon the audiences the sense of his own responsibilities. The play was written more rapidly than any other of Ibsen's prose plays. Dr. Thomas Stockmann represents the fighting dramatist who in 1885 had said to some workmen, "Democracy alone cannot solve the social question. An element of aristocracy needs to be infused into our life." There is something English in the character of the pugnacious doctor. He is the forth-speaker like Carlyle, the corrective thinker like Herbert Spencer, who twenty years before had said "majorities are usually wrong."

Vildanden, 1885 One more play belongs to this first phase of Ibsen's second and culminating period. In *The Wild Duck* the courageous evaluator of ideas turns his attention upon the destructive rôle played even by the best ideas when they are forced upon those who are not ready for their acceptance. Again Ibsen emphasizes the necessity of independence and integrity of character when he insists that even the best ideals are poor "pillars of society" unless they are implanted in the inner springs and motives of men. Good ideals may be crassly used, may be employed to serve private and petty ends. In one of the most moving of his plays Ibsen works out a doctrine that was for long perplexing to his followers for

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the reason that it seemed to repudiate the ideal of fearless truth Ibsen had represented in his early plays. But it was in every way true to his larger principles.

Ibsen's final phase The pronouncements of his "interlude" play, *An Enemy of the People*, had done more than sum up Ibsen's position regarding democracy. They had thrown the dramatist back upon the only ultimate foundations of social integrity. These consisted in human character. As he had at last clarified his position in identifying with the free and responsible man all the virtues of which humanity is capable, it is only natural that from this time forward Ibsen should have found the seat of dramatic action in the human soul rather than in complex social relationship. To these interests he gave the rest of his life. The plays of Ibsen's final, or individualistic, phase are further characterized by an inclination toward a mystical note. In these plays two values run along together, the apparent value in the foreground, and beyond this, revealed by intimations and overtones, the metaphysical value. For the reason that these later plays deal with character rather than with social ideas, they do not so readily adapt themselves to brief summary. Of these plays *Rosmersholm*, 1886, occupies a position between the social and individual phase of the author. It is a study of two characters, who are locked together in a fatal compact. World without end both probe into the mysteries of conscience. Of the two the woman is by all odds the stronger and more independent. *Fruen fra Havet* (*The Lady from the Sea*), 1889, is the weakest of the author's works; not only does the author repeat himself, but the action is almost over-

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come by elements of symbolism and suggestion that are engrafted upon it. *Hedda Gabler*, 1891, is incomparably the greatest work of objective drama created by Ibsen. In it there is no attempt to probe underlying ideas. The play is a study of character in its own right. The analysis of the character of Hedda is one of the most masterly in imaginative literature. In *Bygmester Solnæss* (*The Master Builder*) 1893, the author's symbolical intuitions and secondary meanings again take control of the action and in some respects conceal and confuse both the action and themselves. In Ibsen's last plays, *Lille Eyolf* (*Little Eyolf*), 1895, *John Gabriel Borkman*, 1897, and *Naar vi Doede vaagner* (*When we Dead Awaken*), 1900, the process of decline had set in. The great powers of the master mind were breaking. Throughout these plays evidences appear of a softening of the conception, and of a confusion of actuality with secondary values and symbolisms. While they contain some of the best of the author's stage craft it would be unjust to the master himself to give them high place in an estimate of his mind and art.

*Ibsen as
dramatist
and citizen
of the world*

No mere catalogue of Ibsen's plays can give more than a suggestion of their epoch-making importance. The deepest significance of the plays lies in the fact that now for the first time the world of the theater and the world of affairs is joined. For the elevation of the theater to high place among the agencies of the thought of the time Ibsen is to be given credit beyond any other man. With Ibsen the popular theater rises out of the field of entertainment into the domain of serious research into contemporary

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values. Such an art as this is doubly effective. It elevates the agency. In the hands of Ibsen the theater attained a respect among contemporaries that it has not before enjoyed in modern times. And in elevating the agency it left its mark upon the values, opinions, standards of society itself. In view of these facts, which are generally granted, it is appropriate to inquire by what means Ibsen brought these conditions about. He brought them about by being a dramatist pure and simple. Others had thought to improve the stage, and make it serviceable to the times, by abrogating the dramatist's functions, by becoming philosophers, or reformers, rather than playwrights. Ibsen was playwright first, last, and all the time. He expressed no general judgments; he developed only particular instances. Generations of commentators have sought for Ibsen's philosophy. He repudiated the idea that he was a philosopher. We cannot do better than to take him at his word. Ibsen served the stage and his time by magnifying the playwright's art, by turning upon the rich but sadly entangled materials of contemporary life a clarifying and revealing craft.

*A revaluer
of values*

It cannot be made too clear that Ibsen was not in the strict sense of the word a reformer. He had no axe to grind. He never discussed a specific problem, nor enunciated a concrete solution. In the Nietzschean phrase he was a "revaluer of values." From this fact comes his importance both to the theater and to his times. For no man could employ as Ibsen did the craft of a perspicuous art without making discoveries of first importance in the nature of his material. As a playwright Ibsen discovered that the minds and spirits of men

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were bound by a set of implacable controls. These controls were such as to undermine courage, independence, even the vision and the sense of truth. As a playwright Ibsen found the theater fallen under the control of a morality which was no morality, was the negation of morality. What was called crowd morality meant the submission of conscience and judgment and taste to a referendum. It meant moral judgment by compromise. Scribe had created a system of playwriting that nicely avoided all contentious moral issues. Augier sought always the line of majority favor. Dumas aligned himself with the liberal camp and prospered. The moral compromises of the theater were but reflections of the moral compromises of society. Ibsen discarded all compromises and referred the theater, as he referred all questions of morality, back to the individual soul.

*Ibsen and
"ideals"* One feature of Ibsen's work that causes the most misunderstanding is the devastating light that he throws on ideals. Ibsen treated ideals as he treated character, not according to label, but according to substance. He had started by testing the "pillars of society" and had found them wanting. He found that under an external show of probity and strength there were concealed selfishness and weakness and corruption. At this time he was not so much interested in the judgment of men as of the codes by which men live. These were the real "pillars of society." And too frequently these were false and corrupt. Particularly he subjected to his test the ideals of provincial patriotism, the ideal of the divine right of the majority. Again and again he nails the lies that men live by; in *The Warriors of Helge-*

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land, Love's Comedy, Pillars of Society, A Doll's House, Ghosts, The Wild Duck, and An Enemy of the People. Ibsen's repudiation of any intent to present a single view of life is abundantly borne out by a consideration of the themes of these plays. Not only do these themes supplement each other; Ibsen is known in one play to demolish an ideal that he appears with great pains to have created in a preceding play.

Ibsen and the woman question

Ibsen's championship of woman is but a reflection of his distrust of the illusions of the majority. It came from no blind gyneolatry as Strindberg thought. Until *A Doll's House* the best women of Ibsen's plays had been of the renunciatory type. With this play begins his gallery of enfranchised women. Ibsen's distrust of the majority of average men had its complement in his faith in the superior man. And it is among the superior men that he places women. From his earliest playwriting he had treated women as of a superior order of humanity, superior in intuition, in steadfastness, in unselfishness. Later he comes to hold that they are superior in life force as well. It was this superior being, this Solveig, this Lona Hessel, this Nora Helmar, who was under the dominion of the harsher, cruder-minded male. He took up the cudgels for the fine-minded doll wife in the same way in which again and again he took up the cudgels for the men of finer intelligence who had gifts for the world and were not permitted to employ their gifts. After *A Doll's House* he ceased to consider the woman as victim. He now saw in her a superior practicality, a greater intentness upon simple aims, a clearer vision. Superior in spirit he had

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always shown her to be. Now in such characters as Rebecca and Hilda and Irene he shows her to be superior in the will to get her will. In spite of charges of sentimentalism lodged against Ibsen for his attitude toward women there is not much difference between Ibsen's later position on women and Strindberg's. The author of *Rosmersholm*, *Hedda Gabler*, and *The Master Builder* knew as well as did the author of *The Father* and *Creditors*, that in the order of nature woman is not essentially the creature of an external will, but is herself the repository of the life force.

Ibsen as playwright Ibsen's position as playwright is dominated and defined by a single fact: he is the playwright of the responsible, thinking being. For the theater he accepts the doctrine, "I think, therefore I am." All of the characters in Ibsen's plays, even the servants, of whom he has but few, are thought-directed, thought-energized. Many of the characters suffer maladies of thought, perversities, inversions, lesions. Their strengths as well as their weaknesses appertain to them as thoughtful and self-responsible persons. Many of his characters are concerned with responsibilities to which they are just becoming accustomed, with dilemmas for the solving of which they have no precedents. They are all busy in probing the mysterious powers and obligations of their own souls. Now for the first time are these powers and obligations put into their own hands to administer. With those dead souls which have not yet risen to awareness he is no more concerned than Shakespeare was concerned with the classes below his kings, lords, nobles, warriors, and great money-lenders.

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*Ibsen's
codes of
tragedy*

Ibsen's code of civic responsibility is of great importance as a contribution to the discipline of his time; in the polity of the theater it provides the nearest approach yet achieved in modern times to the canons of Greek tragedy. In the tragedy of Ibsen as in the tragedy of the Greeks the action itself is unimportant. It is the motive, the impulse, the metaphysical clothing of the action that is important. And nowhere is this importance more acute than in the mind of the person who was responsible for the action. Each person has but one garden to till, one plot of ground that he must answer for. This garden, this plot of ground, is his own soul. With Ibsen as with the Greeks every tragedy is an individual one. The spectator is a privileged onlooker viewing the sacred and secret places of the heart. These facts have their influence in the structure and principle of Ibsen's plays. In principle Ibsen's plays represent the code of intimacy, a house of life of which the "fourth wall" has been removed. In structure they represent the retrospective reënactment of important events as seen through the minds of the responsible actors in these events. In such a fashion of playwriting as this, which is, of course, the Greek fashion, the play is but the fifth and culminating act of the tragedy. All the forces have now come to focus. Anxiety and suspense are over. There is nothing left but contemplation, the casting up of debit and credit, the evaluation of motive, the application of synthetic vision to the tangled strains of the action. In such a fashion as this there are many advantages. The play shows the action of the tragedy as it was lived in the minds of the responsible participants. The entire movement of the play possesses a clarity of

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line that is quite dissociated from action. There are no less evident drawbacks. For this fashion of story-telling imposes on the action a sense of the foredoomed and inevitable. It emphasizes the strain of fate, outer and inner, as distinguished from the strain of will. It lacks the plunge, the rise and fall, the sensation of life and experience. The action is always a falling action. The end is implied in the beginning. It is indeed true that every event has its consequences; that the end is implied in the beginning. It is nevertheless true that uncertainty is of the very essence of drama; that the play of life is lived from moment to moment, and not in cumulative sweeps. For the tangled strands of experience Ibsen had no regard. Accepting will as the central feature of dramaturgy he did not so much employ will as the source of the action as employ the action as a medium for testing the quality of the will.

It would manifestly be impossible in a short study to follow the development of Ibsen's fame throughout the world. For this purpose English readers are referred to such books as Eller's, Burchardt's, and Miss Franc's listed at the end of this chapter.

Outside of Scandinavia it was in Germany and England that the fame and influence of Ibsen moved most strongly. For Germany the following dates are significant: In 1868 one of Ibsen's lyric poems was published in Leipzig; in 1870 appeared a review of Ibsen's work by Seibold in the *Illustrierte Zeitung* of Leipzig; 1872, Seibold's translation of *Brand*; 1873, Adolph Strodmann's review of Ibsen in *Geistiges Leben in Dänemark*; 1874, 1876, 1882, other translations of *Brand*; 1875, the first production of an Ibsen play in Germany, *The Pretenders*, at the Duke of Meiningen's Court Theater; 1876, *The Warriors of Helge-*

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land given at Munich; 1878, five theaters presented *The Pillars of Society*; by the early eighties Ibsen's fame had reached its height in Germany.

For England the following dates are notable: 1872, two anonymous reviews (by Edmund Gosse) of Ibsen's work appear in *The Spectator*; 1873, Gosse reviews *Love's Comedy* in *The Fortnightly Review*; 1876, Catherine Ray publishes a translation of *Emperor and Galilean*; 1880, *The Pillars of Society*, translated by William Archer, is produced at the Gaiety Theater, London; 1882, *A Doll's House* translated by Miss H. F. Lord; 1885, *Ghosts* translated; 1888, three social dramas issued in the *Camelot* series; 1890-91, Archer's edition of the prose dramas begins to appear; from 1877 William Archer was the chief intermediary between Ibsen and the British public.

As compared with Germany and England, France was slow in taking up the plays or ideas of Ibsen. By early French critics he was called "the Norwegian Puritan" and was said to be a follower of George Sand and Dumas fils. Count Prozor made the first translation of *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* in 1889 under the titles of *La Maison de Poupée* and *Les Revenants*. Like France, Italy and Spain were slow in appreciating Ibsen at his true value. Works which were in these countries said to display an "Ibsen influence" were as a rule a sad mixture of melodrama and second-hand social ideas.

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BOOK TWO
THE DRAMATIC REVIVAL

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FREEING OF THE THEATERS

Ibsen's Liberating Influence — The New War of the Theaters — Rise of New Theaters — Minority Theaters — The Paris Théâtre Libre — The Berlin Freie Bühne — The London Independent Theater

Theater organization and dramatic authorship **THE** development of contemporary drama has now reached the point at which, if we are to follow with understanding its further progress, we must interrupt the study of authors and plays in order to inquire into developments in the theater. We must do this for the reason that the writing of plays is by no means an independent art. It is always dependent upon conditions that lie beyond the control of the author. Some of these conditions consist in the general state of intelligence and appreciation of the audiences; some of them consist in the state of theatrical organization of the time. The playwright of powerful personality can mould public demand, can even modify the machinery of the theater. The great majority even of the best playwrights are compelled either to write for the theater as it is or to refrain from writing. When, therefore, revolutionary changes occur in the public attitude toward the stage, and in its organization, these are matters of great importance to writers of plays. Such changes took place just before the end of the last century. In part they were changes of popular attitude; in part changes of organization. They had their effect in a liberalizing of the controls that had constrained the art of the theater. Among other influences the work of Ibsen played a very important part.

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Ibsen's liberating influence in the theater

In the case of the work of a great man there are two factors that exercise an influence over his own and succeeding times. The one factor is comprised of the work itself. The other factor is comprised of the legend that, surrounding the man and his works, sometimes comes to be more potent of influence than the work itself. So it is with Ibsen. The plays of Ibsen were epoch-making in applying the thorough standards of a forthright artistry to the treatment of contemporary problems. But not less important than the force of Ibsen's work was the force of the Ibsen legend. This legend operated with all the force of a revolution in the theater.

Nature of his influence

In any consideration of Ibsen's influence upon the theater of his time we need first to get out of the way the influence that was exercised upon those of weaker muscle who were impressed to write in Ibsen's manner. This is, of all his influences, the most negligible. Imitations of Ibsen's themes and manners of treatment were to be found in all countries. Such imitations were entirely inconsistent with any true understanding of Ibsen's principles. The hardy Norse dramatist was not one to encourage nor to respect slavish imitation. He encouraged men to be themselves, to give the theater their best work. And such in effect was his influence. What Shaw said of the English theater is true of the theater of Europe as a whole: "The influence which Ibsen has had in England is almost equal to the influence which three revolutions, six crusades, a couple of foreign invasions and an earthquake would produce." In a very real sense Ibsen freed the stage of outworn traditionalisms

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and technical formulas. Only second to his service as playwright was his service as liberator of other playwrights.

*List of
playwrights
influenced*

With the exception of Rostand there is hardly a dramatist writing in the Western hemisphere between 1890 and 1910 who is not directly or indirectly indebted to Ibsen. The best of Ibsen's influence was exerted upon those men who were too strong and individual to follow his formulas and ideas imitatively. Such men as these he encouraged to seek their own channels of expression, to probe the playwright's world with their own instruments. And hundreds were heartened in courage and faith in themselves through his example. Among the playwrights in whose work a direct indebtedness is to be traced to Ibsen are, for Germany, such diverse talents as Holz and Schlaf, Hauptmann, Sudermann, Schnitzler, Halbe, Dreyer, Hirschfeld, Hartleben, and Wildenbruch; for France, Zola, Brieux, Hervieu, de Curel, Donnay, Bataille, Marie Leneru; for England, Pinero, Jones, Shaw, Grundy, Edward Martyn, John Todhunter, Barker, Galsworthy, Stanley Houghton, Elizabeth Baker, Githa Sowerby, Alfred Sutro; for Italy, Madame Roselli, Enrico Butti, Teresah Ubertis, Marco Praga, Ferrari, Giacosa, and Bracco; for Spain, Echegaray, Galdós, and Dicenta.

*The new
war of the
theaters*

Such a liberating influence could not appear in the theater without arousing bitter opposition. Just as nineteenth-century drama finds its roots in the contests between Classicism and Romanticism, the contemporary revival is rooted in the bitter dissensions released by the plays of Ibsen. In all

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countries the ranks were drawn together; the issues were joined between the opponents and proponents of this new and vitalizing impulse that had appeared in the theater. Paradoxically enough the puritanical and romantic countries such as England and Germany benefited the most through a more ready surrender to the claims of logic and a veracious method. Controlled as she was by a purely technical practice of the art of the theater France accepted the lessons from the North more grudgingly. With the rise of Ibsen there begins the decline in the French domination of the stage. Now successively the playwrights of Germany, England, Russia, Italy, Spain, and America take their places on the world stage. France, which had not learned to discriminate between the drama of Dumas and the drama of Ibsen, continues to fashion plays by the old dusty theatrical methods.

Campaigns of vituperation

In all countries campaigns of vituperation were organized by the defenders of the old orders of playwriting; against these no less vigorous campaigns of defense were waged in favor of the new. Bad tempered and ugly as these campaigns were, they accomplished nothing but good. They served to clear the air, not alone on matters of the theater, but as well on matters of social and individual opinion. In England the campaign for the new drama was conducted by William Archer, Edmund Gosse, R. K. Hervey, Arthur Symonds, Allen Monkhouse, Havelock Ellis, George Bernard Shaw, W. L. Courtney, and A. B. Walkley. The opposition was led by such men as Sir Frederick Wedmore, Robert Buchanan, and Clement Scott. As a page in the history of the modern theater it may be interesting to

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quote a short list of epithets compiled by William Archer from the adverse criticisms of Ibsen, and published by Archer in the *Fortnightly Review* for July, 1893, and by Bernard Shaw in his *Quintessence of Ibsenism*. This comprises a *Schimpf-Lexicon* of abuse gathered from the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily News*, *Lloyds*, *Black and White*, *Truth*, *The Saturday Review*, and other papers: "abominable, disgusting, an open drain, a dirty act, a lazar house, candid foulness, gross almost putrid indecorum, literary carrion, crapulous stuff, naked loathsomeness, repulsive and degrading, morbid and unhealthy, dull dirt, long drawn out, garbage and offal, putrid play, egoist and bungler, consistently dirty, nasty-minded." In Germany the opposition to Ibsen was led by the powerful critic Karl Frenzel; support came from Ernst Wichert, Eugen Zabel, Georg Brandes, L. Pas-sarge, Paul Schlenther, Otto Brahm, B. Litzmann, and Carl Bleibtreu. In France the influential Jules Lemaitre and Francisque Sarcey were strongly anti-Ibsen. Favorable to him were Edouard Rod, Charles Sarolea, Count Prozor, and A. M. Lugue-Poë.

Rise of the new theater The war over the plays of Ibsen was symptomatic of a settling of values in the new theater and the emergence of the theater to a higher place among the activities of the time. For half a century movements for the reform of playmaking had been progressing. Beginning in the eighteen-thirties with the Romantic revival in the French theater these movements had accomplished a revolution in the forms of plays. Prose had taken the place of verse. Contemporary interests, direct and unashamed, had taken the place of

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interest in antiquity or the disguised symbolism of the contemporary. Romance had been dropped or shoved into the cheaper theaters on the side streets in the form of melodrama and sensational plays. In its stead there had arisen a popular and realistic form that reflected subtly the substance and surface of life, that spoke the language of everyday speech, that probed the depths of present perplexities, passions, and aspirations. Within a generation this form had achieved in the hands of Ibsen a mastery of technique second only to the tragedy of the Greeks. Encouraged by the opportunity to express their own opinions, to pursue their own visions of truth through the mazes and avenues of dramatic form, new playwrights were entering the theater. Audiences too had grown in numbers; had increased in subtlety and understanding. But it was not only in plays that renovation was on the way. The artists of play productions had been encouraged by the rise of a new artistry of composition; actors, designers, architects, directors, were seeking ways by which their arts too could be refined and perfected. Men of the theater were becoming conscious of considerations that before they had ignored. They were beginning to see that a realistic play could not be produced by means of the trappings and declamations of romanticism. They were beginning to inquire into that subtle thing known as *rapport*, in other words, into the relation between the psychology of the audience and the psychology of the production.

*Summary of
factors in
production*

In the process of adapting stage production to the new standards of the play and of the audience two factors stand forth:

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- (1) The new requirement for naturalism in setting and production;
- (2) The requirement for psychological method in acting, as implied by the "peep-show stage" or the "room with the fourth wall removed."

The minority theater It would be false to assume that any one theater represented specifically any one of these principles, or even that the development of new systems of staging and production can be clearly traced through successive epochs or events. Manifestations of new artistic tendencies in production, as in playwriting, were severely restricted by that popular control that was the governing principle of the stage as a whole. The plays of Dumas, Augier, and the problem dramatists, no less than the sensational plays that more directly followed the Scribe model, were created to please the popular taste. Ibsen had been the first to challenge the dominion of the majority, and we have remarked the opposition that his plays had aroused among the defenders of popular codes. That same opposition manifested itself, though on a smaller scale, against any effort to reform systems of staging and production. There was appearing in the theater a new alignment of interests between those on the one side who represented the popular will, and those on the other side who represented the integrity of the artist's vision. This opposition, common enough in the other arts, had not before appeared in the theater. As a result of this opposition there arose in the theater a demand for a new type of theater organization which would be adapted to the production of plays created according to the artist's own standards of truth and beauty, and to

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these alone. Without demanding that every theater should be freed from the control of its audience, for this demand would have been impossible of fulfillment, a few playwrights, producers, and actors began to ask that some theaters be freed from this control, in order that they might represent completely the structural and artistic requirements of the artist. From this requirement there developed the minority, or as it has been popularly called, the free, or independent theater, the development of which has made possible the best work in dramatic composition of the past forty years.

The Théâtre Libre of Paris Out of the demand for a new theater which should not confine the talents of independent artists, but should release their powers, there grew the Independent Theaters of Paris, Berlin, and London. Of these the first was the Théâtre Libre, established by André Antoine in Paris in 1887. It has been a commonplace to identify Antoine's work with the campaign for stage naturalism. This view does not represent the facts. Antoine did indeed derive encouragement from Zola and his group, but he did not identify himself with literary preferences. The Théâtre Libre was a theater of experiment, dedicated to innovation in play composition and production. It represented the first movement toward liberation from the deadening influence of the subventioned theaters of Paris and of the commercial theaters of the Boulevards. The amateur producing society had been well known in French theatrical history. Distant prototypes of the Théâtre Libre had appeared in the Paris of the eighteenth century, and in the eighteen-eighties there were many such amateur pro-

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ducing groups in Paris. It happened that this particular society was inspired by a new vision and governed by a man of genius. Its founder, André Antoine, had been born in 1858, had presented himself unsuccessfully at the Conservatoire in 1876, had spent five years in the army, and was in the eighties employed in the Paris gas office. But his heart was in the theater, and this not the theater of tradition, but in the more tantalizing vision of the theater as yet unborn. It was as a member of the amateur producing society, Le Cercle Gaulois, that he took the first steps, in the spring of 1887, toward the organization of the Théâtre Libre. The first home of the new theater was at 37 Passage de l'Élysée des Beaux Arts; in the second season it was housed in the Théâtre Montparnasse, Rue de la Galté; in his third season he crossed the river to the Menus-Plaisirs, Boulevard Strasbourg.

Beginnings of the Théâtre Libre The first indication that the young director had a new vision came when he associated his theater with the most vital creative currents of the new literature. Antoine's first alliance was with Zola's Soirées de Médan group. At the first production, March 30, 1887, three short plays were presented. Of these only one was a success, this being a dramatization by Léon Hennique of Zola's *Jacques Damour*, which had already been refused at the Odéon. For the second production, May 30, 1887, the successful plays were composed by Oscar Méténier and Emile Bergerat. These two performances constituted the preliminary skirmish of the new theater. Their success was sufficient to encourage the director to give up his position with the gas company and to devote all his attention to acting and

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production. On October 12, 1887, the first full season opened with the performance of *Sœur Philomène*, adapted from the brothers de Goncourt by Arthur Byl and Jules Vidal, and *L'Evasion*, a play in one act by Villiers de l'Isle Adam. In order to avoid the censorship, attendance at performances was by invitation. During the first season the high point of achievement was reached in the production of Tolstoy's *The Power of Darkness*.

*Résumé of
the Théâtre
Libre*

The Théâtre Libre lasted ten seasons. From 1887 until the end of the season 1894 it remained under Antoine's direction. For two more seasons it was under other control. These seasons marked the decline of the theater which came to an end with the season of 1896. A year later Antoine established the Théâtre Antoine. During the ten seasons the Théâtre Libre was in existence one hundred and twenty-four plays were produced. Of the one hundred and forty playwrights whose work was presented by the Théâtre Libre, one half had never before had a play produced. In this number are some of the leading playwrights of contemporary France, including Paul Adam, Georges Ancey, Maurice Barrès, Eugène Brieux, Georges Courteline, François de Curel, Lucien Descaves, Henri Lavedan, André Picard, Marcel Prévost, J. H. Rosny, Pierre Wolff. Among other playwrights produced by the Théâtre Libre were Henry Céard, Georges de Porto-Riche, Villiers de l'Isle Adam. Foreign authors introduced to France include Björnson, Hauptmann, Heijermans, Ibsen, Strindberg, Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Verga.

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Influence of the Théâtre Libre The Théâtre Libre was literally epoch-making in the history of the modern theater.

It was no less influential upon the writers of plays than upon producers and actors. And this is in spite of the fact that few evidences of a program are to be found in its record. For a cut-and-dried program was precisely what was not needed. The true force of the Théâtre Libre came in the new spirit of adventure and experiment introduced by it into the whole art of the theater. This was of great importance to France. It was of even greater importance to the theater of other countries, where before long experimental theaters built on the model of the Théâtre Libre began to appear. Of Antoine's work Brieux has said that it was the first to encourage dramatists to do away with old conventions and to try to affect men and women through sincere work reflecting the life of their time; and de Curel has said that the greatest service of the theater was to free the modern French theater from all schools and literary coteries. The Paris Théâtre Libre was the mother of independent theaters throughout France and in places as far separated as Moscow and New York. Like the mother theater these were fleeing the censor, searching out new authors, appealing to the critical judgments of more discriminating audiences by means of plays showing new orders of imagination presented in adventurous and experimental productions. It was characteristic of this form of organization that it would last only until the principles for which it had stood had become the vogue or had been discarded. The independent theaters were essentially transition theaters. Their best claims to be remembered lie in the creative imaginations they released.

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*Die Freie
Bühne*

Die Freie Bühne of Berlin, established in 1889, was, like its French prototype, primarily the outgrowth of a movement for a more liberal form of producing institution. But the motives behind the organization of the German theater were a little more complex than those that impelled the establishment of the Théâtre Libre. The theatrical control which the German innovators sought to avoid was in part local and institutional. But it chiefly existed in the form of an alien domination of the German theater by the well-made play of France. Against this well-made play a vigorous group of German writers were now raising the standard of naturalism. Strangely enough the standard that they raised against French domination was itself derived from France, from that campaign for scientific naturalism that had been conducted by Zola. The establishment of the Freie Bühne was closely connected with this movement for a naturalistic drama.

*Outline of
events lead-
ing to the
Freie Bühne*

The campaign for naturalism in Germany will be reviewed in the next chapter. Certain steps in this campaign leading to a new theater may be outlined here. In 1882, the Hart brothers, Heinrich and Julius, established the magazine *Kritische Waffengänge*, dedicated to an assault upon the older conventions of literature and art. In 1885 Michael Conrad, an ardent follower of Zola, established *Gesellschaft*, like the former periodical devoted to the vitality and courage of the new art as opposed to the old. With these men motives were somewhat mixed. They were heralds of the new day in art; they also identified this new day with Germany. They felt that

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in the march of literary forms the contribution of Germany had not been given free scope. In the same year Karl Bleibtreu issued his pamphlet *Revolution der Literatur*. All of these had been critical rather than creative works. With Arno Holz we come to the first vigorously creative talent of the modern German movement, a talent that was a direct inspiration and encouragement to Hauptmann. Arno Holz derived from Zola, but sought to go beyond him in the pursuit of a naturalism of form as well as of substance. With Johannes Schlaf he wrote the first naturalistic work in Germany, *Papa Hamlet*, 1889, a narrative work which closely approximated the dramatic form. When in 1890 these two wrote *Die Familie Selicke*, a naturalistic drama, the modern movement of German drama was begun.

Organization of the Freie Bühne With this literary movement the organization of the Freie Bühne was closely connected. The theater was established by a committee of nine under Otto Brahm, other members of the establishing group being Maximilian Harden, Theodor Wolff, Paul Schlenther, Heinrich and Julius Hart, Fritz Mauthner, S. Fischer, Gerhart Hauptmann, and Julius Stettenheim. With the group were the two actors Joseph Kainz and Emanuel Reicher. As the literary organ of the Free Stage society there was in 1890 established *Freie Bühne für Modernes Leben*, edited by Brahm and Holz. Even more than the French Théâtre Libre the Freie Bühne allied itself with the creative movements of the new age. Some of its plays were written hot for the occasion. Others were innovating plays which had long been awaiting adequate production

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and in the interim had become a little old-fashioned. Of the plays on the early repertory of the Freie Bühne the *Henriette Maréchal* of the brothers de Goncourt was out of date, but had a fighting preface; Anzengruber's *Vierte Gebot* was a peasant play; Arthur Fitger's *Von Gottes Gnaden* was politically radical. But the real interest of the repertory lay in the modern plays, *Ghosts* by Ibsen, *The Power of Darkness* by Tolstoy, *Die Familie Selicke* by Holz and Schlaf, and *Vor Sonnenaufgang* and *Das Friedensfest* by Hauptmann.

Influence of the Freie Bühne

Like the Théâtre Libre the Freie Bühne was more important on account of the train of events it started in motion than on its own account. Practically everything that has been accomplished in the German theater since 1890 finds its roots in the Freie Bühne group. From this group emerges Hauptmann to a leading place in the drama of a century. With this group the German theater leaps to a position of acknowledged leadership in the history of the contemporary movement in the theater. A new impulse is introduced into German theatrical organization and production. Starting as head of the Freie Bühne, Otto Brahm became director of the Deutsches Theater which had been established in 1882 by the dramatist L'Arronge, made this theater the head of the naturalistic movement in Europe, the chief exponent of Ibsen's plays, and the mother theater from which the career of Reinhardt was inaugurated. Among the German authors introduced by the Freie Bühne were Hauptmann, Holz and Schlaf, and Hartleben; among foreign dramatists produced were Ibsen, Kielland, Tolstoy, Strindberg, Zola, Becque, and

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Björnson. The Freie Bühne came to an end in 1894. But it, too, was a mother of theaters, the creator of actors, playwrights, and producers. In 1890 there had been organized as an indirect outcome of the Freie Bühne the Freie Volksbühne under the direction of Bruno Wille. This later, in 1895, split into two parts. From it the organization of people's theaters extends over Germany.

Conditions in the theater in London In France the free theater had fought against the limiting traditions of subventioned theaters. In Germany it had fought against imported traditions of playwriting and in behalf of the new code of naturalism. In England the independent theaters had to fight enemies more difficult than either of these. They had to fight an almost unbroken ignorance on the part of the masses of the people as to what constitutes the art of the theater, and the inherited prejudices and philistinism of the classes which had the theater under control. If in France there was need to exchange for an outworn formula a new and better one, in England there was need to introduce the art of the theater where before the art of the theater had been dead. The lack of playwrights in England referred directly back to this condition of the popular mind, and to the system of organization which had until within fifty years been fastened to the principle of monopoly and was still under the control of the censor. The influence of Ibsen and his disciples was on the point of dissipating popular ignorance, and was even attacking entrenched bigotry. There was now demand for a new organization of the theater.

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British free theaters Rather less than in other countries does the revolutionary reorganization of the British theater attach itself to a single theater. In this reorganization there are three factors:

- (1) The organization of the Independent Theater of London;
- (2) The organization of the Provincial and Repertory theaters of England;
- (3) The organization of the Irish theater.

The last two will be treated under other heads. It remains to say a word about the work of the Independent Theater. In 1891 George Moore, in *Impressions and Opinions*, had called for an English free theater. The same year Jacob T. Grein established the Independent Theater in Tottenham Court Road, including among its advisory directorate George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, A. W. Pinero, and Henry Arthur Jones. The theater began its existence March 1, 1891, with a production of *Ghosts*. Following this came Zola's *Thérèse Raquin*, and George Moore's *The Strike at Arlingford*. During the following season the theater produced George Bernard Shaw's *Widowers' Houses*. During its seven years of existence the London Independent Theater produced twenty-six new and translated plays.

Influences of these Following the Independent Theater came the Incorporated Stage Society, established in 1904, which had an even more impressive record of productions. And at the same time other theaters of a free and innovating type were established in various provincial cities and in outlying parts of London. These theaters

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were highly important with respect to the forces that they released. As in France and in Germany there is hardly a creative artist of the stage of England during the last generation who does not owe substantial obligations to one or another of the free institutions that started under the shadow of the moribund structure of the old theater. Within a generation these institutions had either become "the theater," or they had provided the workers for its ranks. Having interrupted the study of plays and playwrights in order to inquire into the conditions of the reorganization of the theater, we are now free to return to the study of those forms of playwriting which are the products of the free theaters.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

BEGINNINGS OF THE NATURALISTIC MOVEMENT

Naturalism and Revolt — Emile Zola — Folk Elements and the Common People — Ludwig Anzengruber — The Verists of Italy — Naturalism and Morbid Psychology — The New Form — Influence from the Novel — Russia and the Western Theater — Henry Becque — The "Slice of Life" Idea — Naturalism in Germany

Naturalism and the free theaters THE subject of the freeing of the theaters brings us to the consideration of the naturalistic movement. In many respects the histories of the two movements are joined, though they remained always distinct activities. In one regard the naturalistic movement was, on the side of the play, an expression of the same demand for the liberalizing of the conventions of the stage that the free theater represented on the side of production and organization. And the direct methods of the naturalistic playwrights had a large part in encouraging the organization of free theaters.

The roots of naturalism One needs only to follow the events in the history of the theater in mid-century to see in them many traces of a coming naturalism. The plays of Dumas and Augier, of Ibsen and of the playwrights of the well-made play were, when compared with the plays of Victor Hugo, Bulwer-Lytton, and Sardou, "naturalistic" plays. And so their authors considered them to be. These authors were expressing in terms of the theater tendencies which were at the same time finding expression in the novel and in painting. An important character-

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istic of the revival in the arts of the end of the century lies in the passing of influences back and forth from one art to another.

Naturalism and revolt As in the case of romanticism we cannot entirely dissociate the substance of naturalism from the fiery impulse of revolt by which the naturalistic movement was heralded. It is indeed a question which was the more important in the history of playwriting, the formula of naturalism itself, or the bitter and energetic campaign of destruction of old formulas and old illusions that accompanied it. At this point we have to observe an interesting feature of the naturalistic movement. It was not the men who were loudest in their pleas for reform, and had most carefully rationalized their efforts and programs, who were most successful in the practice of naturalism. In this respect the position of Zola, the proponent of the naturalistic play, is very similar to that of Victor Hugo, the prophet of stage romanticism. Neither was highly successful in the practice of the art he professed.

Naturalism and romanticism In many respects the revolt of naturalism is but a continuation of the earlier revolt of romanticism. Both are revolts against formulas which the artists conceive to be no longer applicable to current events. Both have a social flavor, the one through tending to a greater sympathy with men, the other through tending to a greater reality in the treatment of the life of man. Both tend to draw new circles of people into the theater. And again the naturalistic revolt resembles the earlier romantic revolt in that it

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often implies a movement of liberation from foreign controls, as, for instance, in Germany a revolt against the domination of the French well-made play; in Russia a revolt against the controls of Western culture and in behalf of a more natural, or Russian, fashion of play-writing.

*Zola and
stage
naturalism*

In any consideration of naturalism in the theater it is important to accept at its true value the contribution of Zola. In everything that had to do with liberating the theater from falsehood and dead formulas Zola's services were profound. It must be admitted, however, that the pleas for naturalism made by Zola were based on false premises, and that Zola was not himself a consistent naturalist either in the theater or in fiction. Zola based his theories of naturalism in art upon the processes of experimental science. He said: "I am attempting no justification of my own cause. I am merely expressing my profound conviction — upon which I particularly insist — that the experimental and scientific spirit of the century will enter the domain of drama, and that in it lies its only possible salvation." Inasmuch as Zola rests his case upon experiments and the scientific spirit, it must be said once for all that neither one of them has anything to do with art. In so far as Zola was an artist — and he was in many respects a great artist — his own creative methods differ widely from the doctrines he worked out for the interpretation of his methods. Zola did not write in the scientific spirit. The scientific spirit is inductive, patient, methodical. Zola is impatient, deductive, rhapsodical. He worked through wide generalizations. His

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novels and plays were demonstrations of truisms. Zola was a romanticist working among contemporary forces in a spirit of myth.

Zola's contribution to naturalism

Nevertheless Zola's contribution to the art of the theater was great. In what did it consist?

- (1) He represented an intense absorption in contemporary interests; drama to him was the art of living things, of vital processes;
- (2) He stood for the principle of the open door to truth; he discarded metes and bounds, restrictions and reticences. He stood for the uncovering of secret forces; the probing of hidden passions and pathologies.

Others, notably Ibsen, had practiced by these principles. Zola made them matters of conviction; he made himself their prophet and herald.

Emile Zola (1840-1902), novelist, critic, and playwright, was never highly successful in the theater. His chief plays are *Thérèse Raquin*, 1873, *Les Héritiers Rabourdin*, 1874, *Bouton de Rose*, 1878, *Pot-Bouille* (with William Busnach), 1883, *Renée*, 1887, *Madeleine*, 1889. Adaptations of Zola's novels were made by William Busnach, Henry Céard, Léon Hennique, and Charles Hugot.

The new substance of the naturalistic play

It has been said that in some respects the naturalistic revolt was a continuation of the revolt of romanticism. The romanticists had revolted against an abstract view of life. They had brought into the compass of dramatic action human passions and emotions, and the discordant strains

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of experience. One of the first results of romanticism had been the employment in plays of characters from the aspiring bourgeois classes. The naturalistic play extended this tendency and brought into the field of drama the poor and lowly, the proletariat of the towns, the peasants of the country. It was but a step from the employment of these lowly characters in the drama to the theory that these and these alone constituted the "real people," that all cultured people were but departures from the natural types. Such was the position of Anzengruber when he wrote that among peasants "the passions, expressed without reservation or but clumsily concealed, are more comprehensible" than among city men, and that "evidence of how characters grow or deteriorate under the influence of destiny is easier to produce in a mechanism that lies open to the day." And such was the position of Tolstoy, who said, "The people are stronger, more independent, more just, more human, and above all more necessary than the upper classes. It is not they who should come to our schools; we should learn of them."

*Anzengruber
and the ver-
ists of Italy*

The earliest point at which the common people appear in their own right in modern drama is in those glorifications of the "heroic peasantry" that follow the folk-lore researches of the mid-century. In Scandinavia the collections of folk-tales of Jörgen Moe and Peter Christian Asbjørnsen had led the way to the peasant tales of Björnson. Similar researches in Germany had provided the materials and models for the "serf stories" of Gotthelf, Auerbach, and others. As a rule these stories appear in the form of fiction. But in

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Ludwig Anzengruber of Austria and in the Verists of Italy they find their way onto the stage.

Ludwig Anzengruber (1839-89), Austrian dramatist and novelist, wrote modern folk-plays in dialect in which the homespun peasant thinker held sway. Though serious in theme the plays had a cloak of lightness. Among them are: *Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld*, 1870, *Der Meinadbauer*, 1871, *Die Kreuzelschreiber*, 1872, *Der G'wissenswurm*, 1874, dealing with peasant life, and *Das vierte Gebot*, 1877, and *Der Fleck auf der Ehr*, 1877.

In Italy this romantic pseudo-naturalism of the common people found expression in the provincial drama of the Verists. Their plays were characterized by the sensational, highly colored action of South Italy. Among the early Verists were Luigi Capuana (1839-), author of *Malia* (*Enchantment*), 1894, Giovanni Verga (1840-1922), best known as the author of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, 1884.

Similar forms of provincial peasant drama are found in Spain in the works of Angel Guimerá and Santiago Rusiñol.

*Naturalism
and morbid
psychology*

More important than the discovery of the common man as a substance of drama was the discovery and exploitation of fields of morbid psychology and pathology. Romantic notions to the contrary notwithstanding, the drama of the common man will always be limited by the common man's power of feeling. In eliminating from the fields of dramatic action the morbid and the pathological, dramatists had been governed by two considerations; (1) their lack of knowledge of the pathologies of mind and their belief that what was abnormal was therefore atypical; (2) a Puritanic restraint that held that materials of this order were not fit for

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open treatment. On these positions modern science has thrown a revealing and corrective light. It has shown that so far from these pathologic abnormalities of character being atypical, they are precisely the materials in which an understanding of man is to be sought. And science has shown by clear implication that only by a resolute facing of the facts of abnormality and disease can they be handled and life itself be ordered. Under this view an important function is, of course, awarded to the theater. Science had opened up fields of research and dramatic action that had before been closed. And education demanded that these materials should be treated and the results spread abroad. Into the theater were injected currents of thought and speculation not before common there. Naturally the new topics provoked much argument pro and con. The injection of the topics of abnormal psychology into the drama had a profound effect on the structural laws of the drama; it also aided in the revolution in popular thinking and swept many ancient tabus into the dust bin.

The opening-up of the zones of abnormal psychology to drama was chiefly the work of the Goncourts and Zola. Zola had derived his ideas from Letourneau's *Physiologie des passions*, and Lucas's *Traité philosophique et physiologique de l'hérédité naturelle*. After the Goncourts and Zola the greatest exponents of morbid psychology in the theater are Strindberg and Wedekind.

Naturalism and form If so far we have dealt with the naturalistic movement as if it were a matter of substance alone, this is because the interests of the more vocal of the naturalistic dramatists would lead to this conclusion.

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Meanwhile there was proceeding among the quieter artists of the theater a movement that had more to do with form than with substance. This movement was taken over almost directly from the novel. Between the naturalists of form and the naturalists of substance there was a clear division of interests. The naturalist of substance was interested in the sociology of the theater. The naturalist of form was interested in its artistry. The division between the sociologists of naturalism and the artists of naturalism is not a hard-and-fast one. In the greatest of the naturalists, such as Hauptmann and Gorky, and in one or two of Galsworthy's plays, an interest in the human substance of drama is combined with a magnificent artistry in composition. Nevertheless the division exists, and must be recognized, between the playwright who handles sociological materials for social ends and the artist who makes out of these materials compositions of delicacy and beauty. At the first extreme stands Brieux; at the second extreme stands Chekhov.

*The new
artistry of
the play*

Now practically for the first time in the modern theater do we hear the suggestion that the play itself is a form of art and subject to artistic canons. Playwrights now appear who apply to the art of the theater some of the high and austere standards that are professed by the musician and the painter. For the first time it is heard, too, that form and substance in the theater are not twain but indivisible. Playwrights are heard to maintain that the artist who would achieve the true and sensitive *impression* of life would have added something to the understanding of life. Such ideas as these are partly reflexes against old artifices and conven-

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tions. They are partly the result of a more sensitive relation to the artist's materials and of a greater artistry in fashioning them. In the quest for a better organized and more sensitive medium the stage of Western Europe had the advantage of models provided in the companion art of fiction by Flaubert and the Goncourts; it was also enriched by the influences that now flowed in from the lavish and as yet untapped resources of the Russian theater.

*Influence
from the
novel*

As has been said, important influences in the new stage naturalism were derived from the works of those exquisite innovators, the Goncourts and Flaubert. Neither Flaubert nor the Goncourts ever wrote a successful play, but the ranks of playwrights who borrowed inspiration and ideas from them is legion. Zola expressed an ideal which he had not himself achieved when he wrote of one of his plays that "the action resides not in some plot, but in the inner conflicts of the characters; the logic used is not one of facts, but of sensations and sentiments." Again he says, "What we need to-day is a large and simple delineation of men and things, a drama which Molière might have written." For inspiration of such a play, "large," "simple," "based on the logic of sensations and sentiments," no influence compares with that which came over into the play from the French novel.

The Goncourts, Edmond (1822-96) and Jules (1830-70), brought to the novel and indirectly to the play the ideal of a new order of contemporary history, to be realized not only in its facts and events, but in its sentiments and intimate documents. They were the first impression-

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ists of the modern art of literature, applying the same system of analytical observation and composition to their materials that the impressionist painters used. At first view they seemed to dispense with the unities. There was a unity in their work apart from unities of plot and action. Naturally their ideas would come slowly to the theater. They did, however, write plays, and in their Prefaces attacked the problems of theater production. Their ideas are summed up in the following words: "The modern — everything for the artist is there: in the sensation, the intuition of the contemporary, of this spectacle of life with which one rubs elbows." The Goncourt brothers had part in the following plays: *Henriette Maréchal*, 1865, *La Patrie en danger*, 1873, *Germinie Lacerteux*, 1888, *A bas le Progrès*, 1893, *Manette Salomon*, 1896.

Nor can the influence of Gustave Flaubert (1821-80) be ignored in the theater, though his contacts with the stage are less than negligible. In Flaubert scrupulous exactitude, the vivid and revealing symbol, reached their perfection. He was a realist in the best sense, that of beauty of form. He stood for objectiveness, impassivity, justice, and impersonality, the elimination of sympathy, passion, and partisanship. He said that the human soul must be studied "with the impartiality that one employs in the physical sciences." The influence of Flaubert was strong on novelists from the Goncourts to Bourget and Hervieu; on dramatists from Becque to Hauptmann, Galsworthy, and Chekhov.

Alphonse Daudet (1840-97), the impressionistic naturalist, wrote several plays, of which *L'Arlésienne*, 1872, deserves mention for a natural vivacity and color. . .

*Russia and
the Western
theater*

With this influence from the French novel we have now to consider an influence that entered late into the Western theater, but was of correspondingly greater force when it came. The

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Russian theater had been fortunate in that it had never surrendered entirely to the influence of romanticism and the well-made play from Western Europe. Though she had been subject to alien influences Russia had retained in the Slavophiles a pro-Slav temper. In the theater of Russia this indigenous strain had risen rather than declined during the first half of the nineteenth century. To this fact the theater of Western Europe owes some of the most salutary influences that touched it as the century drew to a close. This is for at least two reasons: (1) the Russian theater retained in its purity a "natural" form of dramatic writing that was peculiarly representative of the Russian genius and promised to be useful elsewhere; (2) it retained this without any of those pugnacious elements of revolt and purposed sensationalism that were poisoning the theater of Western Europe.

We will be able merely to name some of the chief Russian naturalists. Nicoláy Vassílevich Gogol' (1807-52), the son of a Cossack, wrote stories, novels, and plays; excelled in close observation; enjoyed pricking the bubble of pretension. A master technician who was little aware of conventions. His great play is *The Revizór*, or, *The Inspector General*, 1836, of which it has been said that "it resembles reality more than reality resembles itself."

Of Alexander Ostrovsky's (1848-88) forty plays, fully a half have gone into the permanent Russian repertory. He is the Charles Dickens of the Russian theater; his plays crowded with merchants, landowners, petty bourgeoisie. Among his chief plays are (titles in English): *We Shall Settle Matters Among Ourselves*, 1850, *Keep out of a Stranger's Sleigh*, 1853, *The Storm*, 1859. For the latter play the term "drama of life" was invented. Ostrovsky's qual-

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ities are observation, use of vernacular, fidelity to *milieu*, and looseness of construction. Though his influence has hardly penetrated the Western world, Ostrovsky is one of the first naturalists of the modern theater. He worked consistently for the interests of the Russian theater, was President of the Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers, and worked out a program for a private Russian theater of the order of the Moscow Art Theater.

Feodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky (1821-81), like the Goncourts and Flaubert, exercised his influence on the stage from the companion art of the novel. He said that the only man who had influenced him was Nietzsche. In his work as a novelist Dostoyevsky exerted a profound influence on dramatic composition. Through his work the values of the underside of life, the meaning of evil in character, the experimental method in psychological observation are carried over into the practice of dramatists. His greatest influence was expressed through his novel, *Crime and Punishment*, 1866, translated into French in 1867 and into English in 1885. This work, as well as his other novels, *The Idiot*, 1869, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 1881, have been frequently adapted to the stage.

Count Lyof Tolstoy, 1828-1910 In the sense in which Gogol and Ostrovsky are naturalists, Tolstoy is hardly a naturalist at all. In his work the "accusatory" tendency is strong. His plays are fiery social documents, constructed to serve the author's doctrinaire ends. It need not be said that they are composed with a marvelous grasp of common character, and an intense realization of primitive and debased passions. In Tolstoy the impulse of revolt, social and moral, was stronger than any æsthetic demands. For this reason his work passed into the Western theater before the more severely naturalistic and local work of Gogol and Ostrovsky.

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Tolstoy said playwriting was sculptor's work, while writing novels was painter's. "Everything must be clear-cut and in high relief. The incidents must be ready, fully ripened"; he demands "a true individuality of language, corresponding to the characters; a natural and at the same time touching plot; a correct scenic rendering of the demonstration and development of emotion; and the feeling of measure in all that is represented." Chief plays (titles in English): *The Power of Darkness*, 1886, *The Fruits of Enlightenment*, 1889, *The Living Corpse*, 1911, *The Light that Shines in Darkness*, 1911.

Henry
Becque,
1837-1899

The influences of naturalism had long been on the way before the first plays that can strictly be called naturalistic (outside of Russia) were written. The first true naturalist of the French stage, and one of the outstanding naturalists of modern dramatic literature, is Henry Becque. Becque had written several plays of a not very noticeable type when in 1882 he produced his play *Les Corbeaux*, which had been written five years before and at first contemptuously treated by managers to whom it had been submitted. Upon performance it was an immediate success. It was manifest that not only had a new genius arisen in the theater, but that a new standard of stage artistry had been erected. Briefly the qualities of Becque's stage naturalism are: (1) character; (2) composition; (3) objectivity; (4) impassivity. In *Les Corbeaux*, which was written ten years before the establishment of the Théâtre Libre, Becque anticipates the *tranche de vie* idea that was one of the chief conceptions of this theater. Becque eliminates entirely sentiment and romantic glamour from his plays. Character he depicts with bitterness and irony.

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In 1885 Becque wrote *La Parisienne*, one of the most perfect pieces of ironic objectivity the theater possesses.

Becque's plays: *L'Enfant prodigue*, 1868, *Michel Pau-
per*, 1870, *L'Enlèvement*, 1871. *La Navette*, 1878, *Les
honnêtes Femmes*, 1880, *Les Corbeaux*, 1882, *La Parisienne*,
1885.

The "slice of life" idea One of the chief products of the Théâtre Libre was the theory of the *tranche de vie* or the "slice of life." The idea was first expounded by Jean Jullien (1854-), in a volume entitled *Le théâtre vivant*. According to Jullien a play should be a living segment of life. Discarding exposition, dénouements, set conclusions, and even plot, Jullien expounded a play which would give a single dynamic impression of reality. One of the first expressions of the idea was in the form of short plays of horror, in one or two acts, of the type later known as the "Grand Guignol thriller." Though making great claims to originality and modernity, these plays are in fact members of an old family, deriving strains from Gustav Doré, Godwin, even from German Fate tragedy. Important among the dramatists of the *tranche de vie* are Oscar Méténier, Jean Jullien, Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Louis de Gramont, J. H. Rosny. This form was unquestionably of influence on Strindberg and Wedekind.

*Tragédie and comédie
rosse* Somewhat similar to the "slice of life" plays, but as a rule of a higher order of artistry, are the plays known as *tragédie* or *comédie rosse*.

At the basis of this style of play there is a real conception of art, often concealed under extravagance. The form is in effect a revolt against the sentimentalities and sympa-

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thetic excesses of romanticism, which it corrects by a mordant humor and irony and sometimes by cruelty. Over it there is an atmosphere of cynicism and disillusion. This was good as long as it served the purpose, but when the bitter medicine began to be taken for its own taste rather than for its cure the form passed beyond the interests of art. Ultimately the *rosse* plays come to depend simply upon inversions of the moralities or of tradition. Conscience is warped or overturned. The precise application of the term is uncertain. Chandler says that the term originates in Spain. Following the work of Becque the *rosse* plays ran rapidly downhill. They were written in France by such playwrights as Méténier, de Gramont, Adam, Gaston Salandri, Henry Céard, Emile Fabre, Romain Coolus, Georges Courteline.

An interesting type of the *comédie rosse* is the cynical farce of the mediæval type of which Jonson's *Volpone* is an example. Modern exemplars are Zola's *Les Héritiers Rabourdin*, 1874, Eugène Bourgeois's *Le Pendu*, 1891, Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, 1907, and Eugene O'Neill's *The Rope*.

The naturalistic movement in Germany

In the history of the modern theater there came a time when all the mines had been laid. The old theater remained but it was in effect a ruin. The assaults of the revolutionary romantic play, of the theatrical but liberalizing ideas of Dumas, the profound and searching assaults of Ibsen, had left it sorely shaken. It wanted but a final charge to bring the old theater down. This charge was delivered by the Youngest Germany party in the name of German naturalism.

THE NATURALISTIC MOVEMENT

Significance of German naturalism A little book will not suffice even to outline the significance to the theater of the world of the German naturalistic revival. This movement had its origin in many sources. It had one root in the study of Russian naturalism; another lay in the strong enthusiasm of many of the "Youngest Germans" for the doctrines of Zola; yet another influence was derived from the sentimental and yet purposeful naturalism of England. The deepest roots lay in the Fatherland, in the still existent potency of the *Sturm und Drang*, and in the impulse to base an art upon the fundamentals of German character. Perhaps the true significance and import of German naturalism lies in the fact that it is a combination of all of these factors. At any rate it portended an aim to make great works of imagination out of the living materials of daily life.

One aspect in the development of the naturalistic movement in Germany has already been touched upon in the study of the efforts for a free theater. It must be remembered that the Youngest Germany movement, like its prototype sixty years before, the Young Germany movement, was not limited to the theater. However, the theater occupied a large place in the thoughts of its leaders. As far as it attached to the theater it arose from a wish to free the German theater from the control of the representatives of Dumas *filis*, Labiche, Sardou, and Augier. Of these the chief representative was Paul Lindau, of whom it was said that he wrote French plays in German. Strangely enough the revolt against France attached itself to the name of another Frenchman, Emile Zola.

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Arno Holz
and Jo-
hannes
Schlaf

The men who, before any others, brought naturalism into being in the German theater were Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf.

Among the theories held by these two were that creative literature ought to clarify the spirit of contemporary life, depict men and women of flesh and blood, portray passions with fidelity and without reticence, and above all should not seek artificial refinement.

Together they wrote *Die Familie Selicke*, 1890, which is nothing less than a milestone in the path of contemporary drama. Arno Holz wrote *Sozialaristokraten*, 1896, and *Traumulus*, with O. Jerschke, 1904, and *Ignorabimus*, 1913. Johannes Schlaf wrote *Meister Oelze*, 1892, *Gertrud*, 1898, *Die Feindlichen*, 1899, and *Weigand*, 1906.

Structural
qualities of
naturalism

In the matter of the structural qualities of naturalism no critic can afford to be dogmatic. Certain qualities of the naturalistic play stand out, however, either as ideals or achievements. The naturalistic play seeks to dispense with the technical expedients both of romanticism and of the well-made play: soliloquies, asides, confidants, *raisonneurs*. It tends to return to the economies of classical construction in respect for the unities. It eliminates artifices in plot in favor of an arrangement of the facts after the pattern of life. It emphasizes character, but avoids caricature. It insists upon observation and composition in the sense in which these terms are employed in the art of painting. It discards the literary and narrative qualities of the production, style, symmetrical dialogue, etc., in favor of the observed surface qualities of life. Particularly it seeks to invest the materials of every-day common experience,

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meticulously observed and architecturally recreated, with an informing soul, so that the auditor is compelled to take the action of the play as his own concern and draw from a specific arrangement of events its wider significance.

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CHAPTER NINE

THE DRAMATIC REVIVAL OF THE NINETIES

Memorable Years in the Theater — German Drama — Hermann Sudermann — Arthur Schnitzler — French Drama — Porto-Riche — Brieux — Hervieu — De Curel — English Drama — Wilde — Pinero — Jones — American Drama — Spanish Drama — Echegaray and Galdós — Italian Drama — Giacosa

In Chief British Dramatists:

Caste, by T. W. Robertson.

Pygmalion and Galatea, by W. S. Gilbert.

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, First Series:

Lady Windermere's Fan, by Oscar Wilde.

The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, by Arthur Wing Pinero.

Michael and his Lost Angel, by Henry Arthur Jones.

Das Glück im Winkel, by Hermann Sudermann; translated as *The Value of Content* by William Ellery Leonard.

La Robe Rouge, by Eugène Brieux; translated as *The Red Robe* by F. O. Reed.

Connais-toi, by Paul Hervieu; translated as *Know thyself* by Barry Cerf.

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, Second Series.

L'Amoureuse, by Georges de Porto-Riche; translated as *A Loving Wife* by J. P. W. Crawford.

A culminating revival To the reader who has followed the argument of the preceding chapters some clear tendencies in the development of contemporary drama are manifest. It is clear that no theatrical activity of any vigor whatever is limited to local operation; that the drama is functioning on a world stage. It is clear that the substance and form of drama are, in the period under review, approaching always nearer to concrete and intimate reality. And it is clear that events in the theater are moving at an accelerated pace. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, these factors combined to create a

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dramatic revival of great intensity and wide distribution.

Factors in the revival Always granting that an important place is to be given to peculiarly local conditions, the three general forces which were of the greatest influence in releasing the dramatic revival of the nineties were the following:

- (1) The influence of the well-made play of Scribe, as transmitted through its two branches of (a) the sensational theater piece (cf. Sardou); and (b) the purpose and problem play of Dumas and his followers;
- (2) The influence of the hard intellectual integrity of Ibsen applied to all factors of dramatic art and organization;
- (3) The influence of the new ideas of form and method as expressed in the experiments of the free theaters and the naturalists.

Summary of conditions of the revival The emergence of the influences enumerated above was for the time being accompanied by the virtual extinction of the imaginative and romantic play. Such romantic plays as were at this time written (always excluding the romantic revival of Rostand and others, later to be treated) were relegated to a narrow corridor alongside the main structure of the stage. The experiments toward a looser form of construction which were to dominate the new century were now only hinted at in out-of-the-way places. Taking these facts, along with the increase in demand for entertainment, the more business-like organization of the theater, and the protective organizations of playwrights, and we

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have the conditions which within a decade raised the craft of the playwright from an unhappy hazard to one of the most dignified and profitable of pursuits. At this point the number of expert craftsmen is greatly multiplied. Of these only those of an extraordinary creativeness can be considered separately. The others must be considered in platoons.

*Memorable
years in the
theater*

No period since the age of Elizabeth has seen such a burst of creative vigor in the theater as was witnessed during the last decade of the nineteenth century. While the dramatic activity of the late Renaissance had been limited to spots in Europe, the activity of what we now call "contemporary drama" had been universal. And it was of high character. During the five years, 1889 to 1894, there appeared the first successful stage plays of Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, Gerhart Hauptmann, Hermann Sudermann, Frank Wedekind, Maurice Maeterlinck, Edmond Rostand, Arthur Schnitzler, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. In addition to these, Pinero, Jones, Strindberg, Brieux, Galdós, Donnay, Porto-Riche, and Capus, who had issued their first plays in an earlier period, came during these momentous years to a full fruition of their powers.

One cannot better indicate the achievements of the first half of the tenth decade of the century than by enumerating a list of productions made during this period:

In 1890 there were produced Strindberg's *The Stronger*, *The Creditor*, *Pariah*, *Facing Death*; Hauptmann's *The Coming of Peace*; Jones's *Judah*; Fulda's *The Lost Paradise*; Maeterlinck's *The Blind* and *The Princess Maleine*.

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In 1891: Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*; Hauptmann's *Lonely Lives*; Wedekind's *The Awakening of Spring*; Jones's *The Crusaders*; Maeterlinck's *The Intruder*; Sudermann's *Sodom's End*.

In 1892: Hauptmann's *The Weavers* and *Colleague Crampton*; Hartleben's *Hanna Jagert*; Halbe's *Youth*; de Curel's *A False Saint* and *The Fossils*; Lavedan's *Prince d'Aurac*; Donnay's *Lysistrata*; Hervieu's *Words Remain*; Brieux's *Blanchette*; Maeterlinck's *Pelléas and Mélisande*; Echegaray's *Mariana*; Galdós's *Reality*; Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*; Shaw's *Widowers' Houses*; Yeats's *The Countess Kathleen*.

In 1893: Strindberg's *Debit and Credit*; Hauptmann's *The Beaver Coat* and *Hannele*; Schnitzler's *Anatol*; Hofmannsthal's *Death and the Fool*; Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*; Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*; Ibsen's *Master Builder*; Sudermann's *Magda*.

In 1894: Rostand's *The Romancers*; Giacosa's *The Rights of the Soul*; Galdós's *The Duchess of San Quintin*; Benavente's *Thy Brother's House*; Jones's *The Case of Rebellious Susan*; Shaw's *Arms and the Man*; Barrie's *The Professor's Love Story*; Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire*.

It remains now to sketch in summary form the record of theatrical events in various nations during these culminating years.

GERMAN DRAMA

*Emergence
of German
drama*

With the last decade of the century German drama steps vigorously out of her period of dejection into a position of leadership in the theater of Europe. For a century German drama had been the prey to a confusion of influences. This fact had not been entirely to the discredit of her playwrights. It

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marked, as least in part, the higher inclination of their aims as compared with the aims of the playwrights of France, England, Italy, and Spain. The German dramatists had been the last to cling to the ideal of the romantic play in verse dealing with heroic and imaginative conceptions. While the French theater had fallen into sensational melodrama, and the hollow formulas of the well-made and problem plays, the history of the German theater showed a series of playwrights from Goethe, through Hebbel, Ludwig, Gutzkow, Grillparzer, down to Wildenbruch, who sought to adapt the imaginative principles of romanticism to the illumination of the facts of life. It was Germany that kept the poetic principle alive in the theater, and when, with the new century, the poetic imagination found other mediums of expression it was in Germany that they found their freest scope.

Late representatives of the romantic and poetic drama in Germany were:

Ernst von Wildenbruch (1845-1909) whose chief plays were *Die Karolinger*, 1882, *Harold*, 1882, *Die Quitzows*, 1888, *Der Generalfeldoberst*, 1889, *Die Haubenlerche*, 1891, *Die Tochter des Erasmus*, 1900.

Adolf Wilbrandt (1837-1911). Representative plays: *Jugendliebe*, 1872, *Nero*, 1876, *Die Tochter des Herrn Fabricius*, 1883, *Der Meister von Palmyra*, 1890.

Paul Heyse (1830-1914). Representative works: *Francesca von Rimini*, 1850, *Die Sabinerinnen*, 1859, *Hans Lange*, 1864, *Maria von Magdala*, 1899.

*Conditions
in the Ger-
man theater*

Much of the vitality of German drama during the dramatic revival is to be credited to the receptiveness and catholicity of the German theater throughout the nineteenth century. In her

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hundred court and municipal theaters Germany had provided production for the playwrights of England, Spain, France, and for the new drama of the Scandinavian countries. This catholicity itself served to give an appearance of confusion to the German theater through the very multiplicity of influences. Prominent among the conditions immediately preceding the dramatic revival are two:

- (1) The important place taken in the popular theater by playwrights representing the French schools of play composition;
- (2) The temporary overshadowing of the creative impulse in the North German theater by the great activity in the theater of Austria.

It was from these conditions that the activities of the Youngest Germany party raised the theater of North Germany to a vigor which is still on display. This was done without impairing the activity of the theater in Austria, by emphasizing, first the German, and then the international strains in contemporary thinking. Since 1890 German drama has flowed in two strong streams, the one from North Germany, the other from Austria, without either one losing in vigor. The force that awakened the theater of North Germany to activity was naturalism. But naturalism was only the key that unlocked the door. Through that door there came works as widely divorced from naturalism as the works of the later Hauptmann, of Wedekind and the Expressionists.

Hermann Sudermann,
1857— Among the German playwrights who appeared in the nineties, two stand out pre-eminent. These are Hauptmann and Wede-

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kind. They are reserved for later treatment. Among the rest the man who takes the highest rank by reason of popularity and vigor, if not of artistic quality, is Hermann Sudermann. Because he appeared at the time of the naturalistic revival, and because his plays borrowed something of social passion from the ideas of the Youngest Germans, Sudermann was long held to belong to this radical group. In fact his associations belong to an earlier form of playwriting. In his plays the storm and stress spirit of Germany expresses itself through the formulas of the French problem play. A man of impressionable nature, with little to say for himself, but with inexhaustible energy, some power in the creation of character, and much skill in the manipulation of intrigues, Sudermann derived his themes from a sketchy reading of Tolstoy and Zola, but his real sympathies were with Dumas and de Curel. Of naturalism in the sense that Becque, Chekhov, and Hauptmann employed it he knew nothing. With Pinero, Lavedan, and Bataille he was a man of the theater who amused himself by making entertaining and impressive stage pieces out of the latest vogue in popular opinion. Sudermann's work is marked by a variety of method, from sentiment to sardonic satire, from realism to the extreme of romantic fantasy.

Sudermann's chief plays: *Die Ehre*, 1890, *Sodoms Ende*, 1891, *Heimat*, 1893, *Die Schmetterlingsschlacht*, 1895, *Das Glück im Winkel*, 1896, *Morituri*, three one-act plays, *Fritzchen*, *Teja*, *Das Ewigmännliche*, 1896, *Johannes*, 1898, *Die Drei Reiherfedern*, 1899, *Johannesfeuer*, 1900, *Es lebe das Leben*, 1902, *Der Sturmgesele Sokrates*, 1903, *Stein unter Steinen*, 1905, *Strandkinder*, 1910, *Der Bettler von Syrakus*, 1911, *Die gutgeschnittene Ecke*, 1916.

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Arthur Schnitzler, 1862—

For the second German playwright of the dramatic revival (with the exception of Hauptmann, Wedekind, and Hofmannsthal) we go to Austria. Like Sudermann, Schnitzler was trained in the French school of the theater. Unlike Sudermann, he had a definite individual vision and much artistic integrity. In problems as such Schnitzler is not interested. He is, however, interested in those contemplative moods that are associated with problems. Schnitzler is the master of two types of dramatic writing. In the first he is the *boulevardier*, with a touch of cynicism, much grace, and melancholy good nature. The Anatol cycle could have been written nowhere but in Austria or in Hungary. In the second he is the ruminant artist spinning in lonely twilight mood his recollections of dead days and forbidden loves.

Schnitzler's chief plays: *Anatol*, 1893, *Liebelei*, 1895, *Freiwild*, 1897, *Das Vermächtnis*, 1898, *Der grüne Kakadu*, 1899, *Der Schleier der Beatrice*, 1900, *Reigen*, 1900, *Lebendige Stunden*, *Die Frau mit dem Dolche*, *Die letzten Masken*, *Literatur*, one-act plays, 1901, *Der einsame Weg*, 1903, *Zwischenspiel*, 1904, *Der Ruf des Lebens*, 1905, *Komtesse Mizzi*, 1909, *Das Weite Land*, 1910, *Professor Bernhardi*, 1912, *Frau Beate und ihr Sohn*, 1913, *Die Schwestern*, 1918.

Other German dramatists of the revival

Other German dramatists of the revival can only be named. Like Sudermann and Schnitzler, they were chiefly concerned with social problems and questions of conscience. Their themes are derived from Dumas and Ibsen, their methods from these as well, with some tincture of an influence from

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naturalism. A modern critic, S. C. de Soissons, has called attention to the fact that German drama deals particularly with three classes of persons: (1) peasants; (2) beaureaucrats, teachers, soldiers; (3) artists. In these three classes we have a typical cross-section of German society as it was seen in the German theater before the war.

Max Halbe (1865-). Chief plays: *Jugend*, 1893, *Mutter Erde*, 1897, *Das tausend-jährige Reich*, 1900, *Der Strom*, 1903.

Otto Erich Hartleben (1864-1905). Chief plays: *Angèle*, 1890, *Hanna Jagert*, 1892, *Die Erziehung zur Ehe*, 1893, *Rosenmontag*, 1900.

Otto Ernst (O. E. Schmidt) (1862-): *Jugend von Heute*, 1899, *Flachsmann als Erzieher*, 1900.

Georg Hirschfeld (1873-): *Die Mütter*, 1896, *Agnes Jordan*, 1898, *Der Weg zum Licht*, 1902.

Max Dreyer (1862-): *Drei*, 1892, *Der Probekandidat*, 1899.

Carl Hauptmann (1858-1921): *Marianne*, 1894, *Waldleute*, 1895, *Ephraims Breite*, 1898, *Moses*, 1906, *Napoleon Bonaparte*, 1911, *Krieg, ein Tedeum*, 1914.

Ernst Rosmer (Elsa Bernstein) (1866-): *Dämmerung*, 1895, *Königskinder*, 1898.

Franz Adam Beyerlein (1871-): *Zapfenstreich*, 1903.

Ludwig Fulda (1862-): *Das verlorene Paradies* 1890; *Talisman*, 1892.

FRENCH DRAMA

*Conditions
in French
theater*

When we come to French drama during the strategic closing years of the nineteenth century, we find a strange reversal of position. Paris, which had been the dramatic capital of Europe,

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maintains, it is true, her activity and technical leadership. It is estimated that more than ten thousand plays were presented to the Parisian public in the three decades following the Franco-Prussian War. The number of theaters greatly increased. Playwrights multiplied and prospered. In every material way the theater of France was flourishing. But the fresh and vigorous imagination necessary for the creation of vital works of stage art was lacking. A summary judgment of French works of stage art as a whole during this period would call for the verdict: prolific, expert, second-rate. Exceptions to this verdict there are, of course. The fact remains that even the best works of French stage art during the contemporary period either lack imagination or overgoad the imagination and weary it. The reasons for this condition are three: (1) the continuing vogue of the well-made play; (2) the persistent demand for literary style in stage art; (3) the persistence of abstract ideas in the drama. French drama is still under the incubus of theories and problems. It is a strange paradox that the drama that worships technique should end by undermining its own vitality; that the drama that pursues ideas in season and out should have so few ideas to express. French playwrights have rung the changes on love, on politics, on society, on education, on business, and on morality with great seriousness, but without great illumination. This could be forgiven them if they had written moving dramas, if they had created living characters, or had discovered deep-lying places in the human spirit. These things they have not done. In the midst of work that was on the whole expert but dull, the pseudo-naturalism of the Théâtre Libre group, the sensationalism of the

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Grand Guignol *comédie* and *tragédie rosse* plays, and the work of Rostand supply only interludes.

Four leading playwrights of the French theater Among the many playwrights who employed the play as an agency of analysis, exposition, or persuasion, four stand distinguished by an extraordinary craft. Of these Georges de Porto-Riche is subtle and intuitive in the handling of psychology; Eugène Brieux is the most naturalistic and objective and at the same time purposeful; Paul Hervieu is the artificer of logical demonstrations in dramatic form; François de Curel has the deepest insight into the outlying reaches of morbid psychology.

Georges de Porto-Riche, 1849- In Georges de Porto-Riche there is something of the lightness and fantasy of Mari-vaux and Musset combined with the sharp edge of Becque and the psychology of Bourget. Supreme as the psychologist of love, he is an artist who lets drama flow out of the inner lives of his characters. His greatest play, and the play in which the drama of ideas approaches nearest to great art, is *L'Amoureuse*, which has long had a place in the repertory of the Comédie Française. With the psychological insight of a Strindberg, Porto-Riche treats the subject of predatory love in a comedy of marvelous balance and sympathy.

Chief among Porto-Riche's other plays are *La Chance de Françoise*, 1888, *L'Infidèle*, 1890, *Le Passé*, 1898, *Le vieil Homme*, 1911, *Le Marchand d'estampes*, 1918.

Eugène Brieux In Eugène Brieux the employment of drama for purposes of demonstration and persua-

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sion goes further than in any other modern playwright. Brieux owes his career to the Théâtre Libre. As a dramatist he is a product of Dumas and Becque and the scientific theories of Zola. Unlike the practice of Zola, Brieux's method is entirely deductive. In his plays he makes a careful statement of a specific case which he takes pains at the same time to endow with a typical quality. While his conclusions attach only to the case under consideration, the author does not avoid a wider application. Brieux is the supreme example of the purpose playwright. He expects his plays to serve definite causes and constructs them accordingly. Nor is this power in the pleading of causes gained at the expense of artistry. Brieux is expert in demonstration because he has an absolute command of detail. Before he began to write purpose plays he had trained himself in the craft of the theater of naturalism. Without great subtlety, his observation is so sure that nothing relevant to a subject is permitted to miss him. He is that rare thing, an artist who can feel enthusiasm and scorn without poisoning his artistry. Brieux holds that a true picture of events necessarily leads to a conclusion. He holds that there can be no objection to the purpose play if its purpose be fairly conceived and served. Not true pleading but false pleading is the sin. And while many claim that Brieux pleads with brutal force, no one claims that he pleads falsely.

Eugène Brieux (1858-) was born in Paris, the son of a carpenter. He had little schooling. After serving as journalist at Rouen, his *Ménages d'artistes* was done in 1890 by Antoine; in 1892 the same manager produced *Blanchette*. Thereafter he produced among other plays: *L'Engrenage*, 1894, *Les Bienfaiteurs*, 1896, *L'Evasion*,

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1896, *Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont*, 1897, *Le Berceau*, 1898, *Résultat des courses*, 1898, *La Robe Rouge*, 1900, *Les Avariés*, 1902, *Maternité*, 1903, *La Française*, 1907, *La Foi*, 1909, *La Femme Seule*, 1912. Brieux's themes have been enumerated as Déclassés, Parents and Children, Politics, Charity and Philanthropy, Literature and Science, Marriage and Divorce, Separation, Adultery, the French Magistracy, Wet-Nursing, Venereal Diseases.

Paul Hervieu At the opposite pole from Brieux and still a craftsman of remarkable power is Paul Hervieu. Hervieu is an inductive logician in the drama. He begins with an abstract conception and employs the play for the illumination of this conception. His interest is never in the specific fact, but in the underlying idea. It follows that his characters are puppets, bloodless, inhuman, living in a rarefied atmosphere of reason. Hervieu's plays are justified by their extraordinary logic, and while there is no passion in them there is understanding of passion.

Paul Hervieu (1857-1915). Chief plays: *Les paroles restent*, 1892, *Les Tenailles*, 1895, *La Loi de l'homme*, 1897, *L'Enigme*, 1901, *La Course du flambeau*, 1901, *Le Dédale*, 1903, *Le Réveil*, 1905, *Connais-toi*, 1909, *Bagatelle*, 1912.

François de Curel One of the chief products of the Théâtre Libre, a theater playwright who attains distinction in France because he never surrendered entirely to the formulas of the French theater, is François de Curel. De Curel searches the outlying ranges of the soul for strange and wayward motives. Of these he makes his plays and they are fashioned with intensity and conviction. Taking the conventional themes of the French do-

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mestic situation play, de Curel so manipulates these as to reveal unexpected spiritual qualities.

François de Curel (1854-). Chief plays: *L'Envers d'une sainte*, 1892, *Les fossiles*, 1892, *La Figurante*, 1896, *La nouvelle Idole*, 1899, *La Fille sauvage*, 1902, *Le Coup d'aile*, 1906, *La Danse devant le miroir*, 1914.

Other French playwrights With notable exceptions that will readily come to mind the four playwrights named above supply the models and themes of the mass of thoughtful French drama during the past generation. In his book on *The Contemporary Drama of France*, Chandler has classified modern French dramatists as naturalists, makers of mirth, ironic realists, moralists, reformers, laureates of love, poets, and romancers. With the exception of the work of the poets and romancers, there is a notable similarity in the plays written in the classes named above.

Henri Lavedan (1859-): *Le Prince d'Aurec*, 1894, *Le deux Noblesses*, 1894, *Le nouveau Jeu*, 1892, *Le vieux Marcheur*, 1895, *Le Duel*, 1905, *Sire*, 1909, *Le Goût du vice*, 1911.

Jules Lemaître (1853-1914): *La Révoltée*, 1889, *Le député Leveau*, 1890, *L'Age difficile*, 1895, *Le Pardon*, 1895.

Maurice Donnay (1859-): *Lysistrata*, 1892, *Amants*, 1895, *L'Affranchie*, 1898, *Le Torrent*, 1898, *L'autre Danger*, 1902, *Le Retour de Jerusalem*, 1903, *Le Ménage de Molière*, 1912, *Les Eclaireuses*, 1913.

Other dramatists of the revival are: Henry Bataille, (1872-1922); Paul Bourget (1852-); Alfred Capus (1858-); Romain Coolus (René Weil) (1868-); Emile Fabre (1870-); Albert Guinon (1863-); Octave Mirbeau (1848-1917); Oscar Méténier (1859-).

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ENGLISH DRAMA

Summary of conditions The situation in the English theater at the end of the nineteenth century was unlike that of any other country in Europe. In both France and Germany some lingering strains of the former glories of dramatic literature still persisted. In England dramatic art had practically disappeared. All that was left was the decayed convention of romanticism in the composition and acting of the more ambitious plays, and, on the side of the commerce of the theater, an almost complete surrender to the traditions of frivolous entertainment derived from the Continent. The more artistic and intelligent classes had been almost completely alienated from the theater. The English stage suffered under the twin burdens of commercialism and Puritanism. The commercial spirit was responsible for flooding the stage with adaptations of second-rate Continental works. The restrictions of Puritanism were responsible for a certain obliquity and moral color blindness that were enforced upon playwrights and audiences. Summing up the governing conditions of the English theater we may say that they were three: (1) the repressive influence of popular codes of morality upon the imaginations of writers; (2) an archaic and unbusinesslike commercial organization that rested like an incubus upon the artists of the theater; (3) a dependence upon imported dramas for the chief supplier of modern plays.

In the thirty years between 1860 and 1890 two men of original and creative genius had appeared in the English theater. Thomas W. Robertson (1829-1871) had sought to introduce into his "cup and saucer" plays a natural and domestic tone reflecting the actualities of life rather

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than the artificialities of the theater. In his early work he was influenced by Augier. His plays to-day appear thin. Chief among his original plays are: *Society*, 1865, *Ours*, 1866, *Caste*, 1867, *Play*, 1868.

Had William Schwenck Gilbert (1835-1911) been born in another country or in a later time his gifts would have made him a writer of comedy of first rank. As it was he wrote one or two comedies that pointed the way to Wilde and Shaw and then devoted his life to the composition of comic opera librettos of marvelous charm and expertness. Among these are: *H.M.S. Pinafore*, 1878, *The Pirates of Penzance*, 1879, *Patience*, 1881, *Iolanthe*, 1882, *The Mikado*, 1885, *Ruddigore*, 1887.

Renaissance of the Eng- lish drama

Such were the conditions when, in the last decade of the century, the British theater sprang forward to a vitality only two or three times before paralleled in its history. This renaissance was the result of the concurrence of many forces, some of which had been working within England, others of which were derived from the regenerative influences at work in the world theater. Locally there had been for almost a century profound dissatisfaction over the organization of the British theater. This demand for better agencies of theatrical production was now on the point of culminating in the new repertory and provincial theaters which were soon to be crowded with new artists and playwrights. No less significant was the influence from abroad which was now contriving to break through the iron bonds of Puritanism and to permit the free play of the dramatist's imagination on themes that did not insult the intelligence of the audience. The three men who are the heralds of the renaissance of the English theater are

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Oscar Wilde, Henry Arthur Jones, and Arthur Wing Pinero.

Oscar Wilde The first man to carry the modern English play to an honored place on the world stage was Oscar Wilde. Appropriately enough it was through comedy that this was done. Wilde refers the English stage back to those strains of high comedy which have at various times been its glory. He employed the force of reform movements in the theater to revive ancient forms of art. Purists can object that Wilde's plays are modern and highly ornamented forms of classical high comedy. Admittedly Wilde makes a combination of the French well-made play and the forms of Restoration drama. But in his plays the contribution of Congreve is stronger than that of Scribe. Wilde set the center of high comedy again definitely in England, and in *Salome* he wrote one of the first works fashioned for the new producing art of the stage.

Oscar Wilde (1856-1900). Chief plays: *The Duchess of Padua*, 1883, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, 1892, *A Woman of No Importance*, 1893, *Salome* (written first in French), 1894, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, 1895, *An Ideal Husband*, 1895.

Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Wing Pinero Throughout their lives Henry Arthur Jones (1851-) and Arthur Wing Pinero (1855-) have been united in the studies of critics and students of drama. They must be united here, not because of any similarity of their work, for their plays were utterly dissimilar, but because together they represent the final obeisance of the old

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theater of illusions and false-face to the modern necessities and impulses of art. In their youth both allied themselves with the popular theater, Pinero as an actor, and through the avenues of farce and light comedy, Jones as a writer of melodramas and sentimental pieces for middle-class audiences. Both prospered in the commercial theater. But both were men of adroitness and sincerity, quick to apprehend a new impulse in the air. The events of the eighties on the Continent impressed them both, but differently. Always having something of the moralist in his nature, believing in the power of sermons, Jones began to preach for the new theater, and to preach in it. As an expert man of the theater, Pinero saw in the themes and experiments of the Continental playwrights encouragement to experiment on his own part. He wrote many styles of plays, always expertly, always with a supreme craft. Of the two, Pinero was the better stage craftsman, Jones the more nearly native in atmosphere. The work of Pinero was a compound of influences; Jones was content to remain more snugly within his own limitations. A craftsman of unusual skill, Pinero never attained that marriage of form and substance in which resides the final integrity of truth.

Henry Arthur Jones's plays fall roughly into three classes: (1) melodramas; (2) problem plays; (3) satires and comedies. His chief serious plays are: *The Silver King*, 1882, *Saints and Sinners*, 1884, *Hoodman Blind*, 1885, *The Noble Vagabond*, 1886, *The Middleman*, 1889, *Wealth*, 1889, *The Dancing Girl*, 1891, *Michael and his Lost Angel*, 1895, *Mrs. Dane's Defence*, 1900; Comedies: *Judah*, 1890, *The Crusaders*, 1891, *The Triumph of the Philistines*, 1895, *The Rogue's Comedy*, 1896, *The Mas-*

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queraders, 1894, *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, 1894, *The Liars*, 1897, *The Manœuvres of Jane*, 1898, *Whitewashing Julia*, 1903, *The Hypocrites*, 1906, *Dolly Reforming Herself*, 1908. Jones wrote also *The Renascence of the English Drama*, 1895, and *The Foundations of a National Drama*, 1912.

Always an expert craftsman of the stage, Pinero is more subject to influences than any recent dramatist of first rank. Among the styles of play represented by Pinero are German farce, Robertsonian naturalism, Labiche light comedy, Ibsenian psychological plays, problem plays, naturalistic plays, fantastic plays. Pinero's chief plays: *Lords and Commons*, 1883, *The Magistrate*, 1885, *The School Mistress*, 1886, *The Hobby Horse*, 1886, *Sweet Lavender*, 1888, *The Weaker Sex*, 1888, *The Profligate*, 1889, *The Cabinet Minister*, 1890, *Lady Bountiful*, 1891, *The Times*, 1891, *The Amazons*, 1893, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, 1893, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, 1895, *The Benefit of the Doubt*, 1895, *The Princess and the Butterfly*, 1897, *Trelawney of the "Wells,"* 1898, *The Gay Lord Quex*, 1899, *Iris*, 1901, *Letty*, 1903, *A Wife without a Smile*, 1904, *His House in Order*, 1906, *The Thunderbolt*, 1908, *Midchannel*, 1909, *Preserving Mr. Panmure*, 1911, *The Mind the Paint Girl*, 1912, *The Widow of Wasdale Head*, 1912, *Playgoers*, 1913, *The Big Drum*, 1915.

AMERICAN DRAMA

Colonial drama Of the drama in the United States until the end of the nineteenth century the best that can be said is that it was colonial. The poetic and romantic play of England, the well-made situation play, the carefully expurgated problem play from France, mingled in imitations and adaptations with the more racy popular entertainments of a frontier country. For years native themes laid their influence on American drama in

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the form of Indian and pioneer melodramas, pungent amusements from the American soil in the form of rustic dramas and satirical plays making fun of the new immigrants, the Irish, the German, the Scandinavian, and later the Jew. The last representative of the romantic verse play had been George H. Boker. In the eighties there had appeared character comedy and farce of a thoroughly indigenous type in the work of Charles Hoyt and Edward Harrigan. With the nineties there came in America as in Europe an awakening in the theater. First in this was Bronson Howard, a representative of the French school of writing who applied his plays to American themes. Of a more authentic and original order of genius was James A. Herne, the first naturalist of the American theater. And in the last decade of the century Augustus Thomas began the writing of his plays of American backgrounds.

Bronson Howard (1842-1908). Chief plays: *Saratoga*, 1870, *The Banker's Daughter*, 1878, *Young Mrs. Winthrop*, 1882, *The Henrietta*, 1887, *Shenandoah*, 1889.

James A. Herne (1840-1901). Chief plays: *Margaret Fleming*, 1891, *Shore Acres*, 1892, *Griffith Davenport*, 1898, *Sag Harbor*, 1900.

Augustus Thomas (1859-). Representative plays: *Alabama*, 1891, *In Mizzoura*, 1893, *Arizona*, 1900, *The Witching Hour*, 1907.

THE DRAMA OF SOUTHERN EUROPE

Slow infiltration of modern ideas For the purposes of our study the drama of southern Europe comprises the drama of Italy and Spain. The inheritors of long traditions, the theaters of both Italy and Spain tended to adapt themselves slowly to the infiltration of modern

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ideas. In both countries the sensational and romantic play, the folk melodrama, tended to persist. When the new ideas of Dumas and Augier, of Ibsen and the naturalists were introduced, they were, as a rule, misunderstood. The themes were accepted for a theatrical value that did violence to the purposes of the authors. For these reasons the drama of both Italy and Spain remained isolated from the currents that we have been studying. It was not until the new century had begun that playwrights appeared in these countries who were equipped to take leadership in the theater of Europe.

Playwrights of Spain During the last half of the century several playwrights arose who began to inject into the almost mediæval themes of Spanish melodrama ideas derived from the new liberal age. As a rule these mingled with difficulty. Form and content were badly confused. The old melodramatic motives, fired by the new passions of freedom and democracy, made, it is true, effective acting plays, but only passable social documents. Of these dramatists José Echegaray (1832-1916) was one of the great men of modern Spain. His influence dominates Spanish drama for four decades. In most of his plays Echegaray tends to exaggeration, sensationalism, passion, outrage, scandal, madness, and fanaticism. Of him Galdós said, "He was, as it were, a thundering, flashing hurricane which changed discreet emotions into violent passions." And yet this man was touched with modernity. In *El gran Galeoto* (*The Great Galeoto*), 1881, he wrote a play which gained international fame. It is a strange combination of old and new elements, of antique conventions and modern psychology. In spite of some old-fash-

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ioned quality the play as a whole carried a fresh message to Spain and to the world.

Other plays of Echegaray are *O locura o santidad* (*Folly or Saintliness*), 1877, *Mariana*, 1892, *El hijo de Don Juan* (*The Son of Don Juan*), 1892, *El loco Dios* (*The Madman Divine*), 1900.

Benito Pérez Galdós (1845-1920) was primarily a novelist who introduced into Spanish literature the methods of Dickens and Balzac. As a playwright he employed the methods of his novels. While his playwriting shows improvement in restraint over Echegaray's extravagances, he was more of a rebel against conventions than any Spanish dramatist of his time.

His chief plays are *Realidad* (*Reality*), 1892, *La loca de la Casa* (*The Life of the House*), 1893, *La de San Quintín* (*The Duchess of San Quintín*), 1894, *Doña Perfecta*, 1896, *Electra*, 1901, *El Abuelo* (*The Grandfather*), 1904.

Other Spanish playwrights of the end of the century are Eugenio Sellés (1844-); Leopoldo Cano (1844-); José Felin y Codina (1847-97); Joaquín Dicenta (1863-); Manuel Linares Rivas (1867-)

Italian drama In Italy as in Spain the play in verse tended to maintain itself into the nineteenth century. While they are a dramatic people, the Italians have little dramatic history. In the nineteenth century there came the romanticists Manzoni and Niccolini, the historical playwright Pietro Cossa, the melodramatist Paolo Giacometti. Some comedians followed the strong lead of Goldoni; namely, Vincenzo Martini, Riccardo Castelvechio, Tommaso Gherardi del Testa, and Achile Torelli. And then there was the Verist movement repre-

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sented by Verga. Characteristic of the Italian stage is the vitality of the provinces, Sicily, Bologna, Milan, Naples, Venice, as compared with the national center at Rome. Over these various native elements there came a flow of influences from the North, from Dumas, Ibsen, Porto-Riche, Donnay, Daudet, Becque, Augier, Molière, Brioux, and de Curel. The result was a mental indigestion in Italian drama and in Italian dramatists.

Leading playwrights Giuseppi Giacosa (1847—), a Piedmontese, established dramatic authorship in Italy as Scribe had in France, Ostrovsky had in Russia. He is the Pinero and Sudermann of Italy, a man of profound theatrical gift, great acquisitiveness, little originality and few ideas.

Chief plays: *Il trionfo d'Amore*, 1872, *Il fratello d'armi*, 1878, *Il Conte rosso*, 1880, *Resa a discrezione*, 1885, *Diritti dell' anima*, 1894, *Come le foglie*, 1900, *Il più forte*, 1905.

Roberto Bracco (1862—) began with *saynètes*, then turned to the theater of Dumas and Ibsen in *Una donna*, 1893, *Maschere*, 1894, and to comedies in *L'Infedele*, 1895, *Il trionfo*, 1895. In his later phase Bracco treated one or another of the pleas for individualism in *Tragedie dell' anima*, 1899, *Il diritto di vivere*, 1900, *Maternità*, 1903, *La piccola fonte*, 1905, *Il piccolo Santo*, 1909.

Enrico Annibale Butti (1868–1915) is a confessed follower of Ibsen. Chief plays: *L'Utopia*, 1894, *La fine d'un ideale*, 1898, *Fiamme nell' ombra*, 1904.

Other Italian dramatists of the naturalistic revival are Gerolamo Rovetta, Camillo Antona-Traversi, and his brother Giannino Antona-Traversi, Signore Amalia Rosselli, Marco Praga, Dario Niccodemi, and Augusto Novelli.

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CHAPTER TEN

GERHART HAUPTMANN

Standardization and Experiment — Four Creative Personalities — Hauptmann and Naturalism — The Youngest Germany Group — Naturalistic Plays — Plays of the Free Imagination — New Psychology of History — Hauptmann as a Playwright

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, First Series:

Die Weber, by Gerhart Hauptmann; translated as *The Weavers* by Mary Morison.

Standardization and experiment in the theater AT the heyday of the dramatic revival two outstanding tendencies are to be discovered. The first is the tendency to standardization in creative activity, arising out of the practice of the well-made play, and continued in the play of ideas and the naturalistic play.

Beside these movements of standardization, and compensating for them, were restless movements of experiment and innovation. The freeing of the theater had enlisted in its service men of creative imaginations who by their genius were pushing outward the frontiers of dramatic art. By nature these men were individualists, iconoclasts. They refused to subject themselves to codes, to act in groups, and by standardized methods. They had their own visions and pursued them in their own fashion.

Naturalism and the creative imagination This division between the expert playwrights who ran in droves and the master dramatists who stood alone was paralleled by a new alignment that was appearing with respect to the naturalistic play. The naturalistic play had freed the stage of formulas and fictions. It had

pointed the way to a more faithful transcript of life. In so doing it had broken a path over which many pedestrian, academic playwrights were to trudge. These took credit to themselves that they were offering *tranches de vie*, fragments of reality; that they were eschewing asides, avoiding coincidences, and artificial complications in plot. All this might be true and their work might still lack that vitality of imagination by which alone a work of art lives from age to age. By those of greater force it was soon recognized that the very aridity of the naturalistic form was a menace to free imagination. It is not entirely by accident that we find the men of second rank limiting themselves to external codes, and the strongest creative artists seeking outlets for fancy beyond the limits of a naturalistic art.

Four creative personalities

We have now to consider the work of four men who, appearing at the height of the modern dramatic revival released a creative genius upon the world of the theater. These men are:

- (1) Gerhart Hauptmann, one of the greatest naturalistic playwrights, and a redoubtable experimenter in dramatic forms;
- (2) Maurice Maeterlinck, who pushed forward the stage of the theater into the deepest recesses of the soul and enriched the principles of dramatic action;
- (3) August Strindberg, who carried the formulas of intellectualistic drama to their logical conclusion in the destruction of the enclosed forms of dramatic construction, and led the way to an expressionistic stage art.
- (4) George Bernard Shaw, who applied the methods of

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ancient comedy to the treatment of the baffling materials of the modern mind.

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Hauptmann and naturalism Of these four, Gerhart Hauptmann has his roots most deeply set in the immediate forms of the popular dramaturgy. The art of Gerhart Hauptmann has its source in the naturalistic play. Hauptmann owes his first introduction to the stage, and first encouragements, to the group of German naturalists who drew inspiration from the doctrines of Zola. Throughout his life he has returned to the practice of naturalism more consistently than to any other form. Nevertheless it must be recognized that Hauptmann is not in essence a naturalist. His practice of naturalism is motivated by the same forces that at other times led him to practice other forms, namely, the insistent necessity to find richer mediums of expression for the spiritual values of the age. Hauptmann has been so sensitive in responding to the impulses of his time that many have thought him to be without style of his own. He has been impressed by many; mastered by none.

Sketch of his life Gerhart Hauptmann was born November 15, 1862, at Obersalzbrunn in Silesia. His grandfather had raised his position first to that of waiter, and then to innkeeper, from the lowly estate of a weaver. His father further improved the family fortunes and became proprietor of a prosperous hotel. Hauptmann's work contains many reminiscences of his early life, and references to the careers of his father and grandfather. Hauptmann was first educated at the village school,

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thence sent to Realschule at Breslau, and finally, after two years spent in an uncle's family, to the Royal College of Art at Breslau. In 1882 he became a special student at the University of Jena. In his young manhood he hesitated between poetry and sculpture. In 1884 he is in a sculptor's studio in Rome. An early poem of this period contains lines which reflect his early moods, and his later life purposes: "Be thy soul as an Æolian harp, O poet. Let the tenderest breath stir it. And always must the strings vibrate in the touch of the world's pain, for the world's sorrow is the root of heavenly love." (*Heimweh und Himmelssehnsucht*, 1884.) In 1885 Hauptmann published his first important poem, *Promethetidenlos*, which deals with a hero who is in doubt as to the form of art he is to employ.

Hauptmann and the Youngest Germany group In 1885 Hauptmann married and went with his bride to live in the suburbs of Erkner. There he came into contact with the members of the Youngest Germany group and joined them in their discussions regarding the future of German literature. Becoming interested in Michael Conrad's magazine *Gesellschaft*, Hauptmann contributed to it, in 1887, a Zolaesque story entitled *Barnwarter Thiel*. This story later served as the basis of his naturalistic play *Fuhrmann Henschel*. Under the influence of Arno Holz, who had with Johannes Schlaf written the first German naturalistic play, and inspired by Zola, Hauptmann now wrote his first drama *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (*Before Dawn*). Offered to Otto Brahm and Paul Schlenther, organizers of the Freie Bühne, the play was produced October 20, 1889, with great success.

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Divisions of Hauptmann's work In the case of a playwright as various as was Hauptmann, any effort to throw his work into hard-and-fast divisions or periods would be absurd. All Hauptmann's plays were motivated by an overpowering urge of expression. In such conditions form cannot be considered to be a limitation upon the art. It is a product of creative necessity. There is in the form of Hauptmann's plays, as distinguished from their themes and substance, an æsthetic factor that raises the form to the level of a major achievement. It is this that has caused Hauptmann to be called the sculptor among playwrights, and the experimental playwright. An artist of the widest catholicity of impressibility, Hauptmann has been less subject than any other playwright of his time to the controls of formulas, even his own. In general his plays may be said to fall into two groups:

- (1) Those plays written in the general styles of naturalism;
- (2) Those plays written under the force of a liberalizing imagination.

Naturalistic plays Hauptmann's early naturalistic plays appear as the first expression in Germany of that naturalistic movement that was later to gain wide proportions. At least one of these plays, *Die Weber*, represents the highest point reached by the naturalistic drama with the single exception of the plays of Chekhov. Naturally enough Hauptmann's early plays carry evidences of influence from many quarters. *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (*Before Dawn*), 1889, shows the influence of Tolstoy and Zola. *Ein Friedensfest* (*The Reconciliation*), 1890, like the former play produced at the Freie Bühne, is Ibsenesque

in arrangement and situation, and carries some traces of French dramaturgy. Of another order of naturalism are those plays which may be called "tragedies of the intellectual life." Of these *Einsame Menschen* (*Lonely Lives*), 1891, is the first of Hauptmann's composition, and the last to reveal a definite Ibsen influence. This play deals with a struggle of religious doubt, and has that strain of maladjustment in love that Hauptmann recurs to frequently. More truly naturalistic and a more biting study of character is *Kollege Crampton*, 1892. Some years later Hauptmann returns to the intellectualistic drama in *Michael Kramer*, 1900, and in *Gabriel Schillings Flucht*, 1912.

Folk tragedy and comedy For his best naturalistic work Hauptmann turns away from the lives of the intellectuals to the simple life of the folk, in city, village, and countryside. In these naturalistic folk-plays of Hauptmann we have evidence of the advance that had been made in the delineation of common character since the folk-plays of Anzengruber and the Italian Verists, and we have the naturalistic high-water mark of Hauptmann's art. All sentimental and romantic qualities are removed; neither caricature nor exaggeration is employed. And yet the characterization is vigorous, clean-cut, memorable. As a rule no character stands high above his fellows. The plays are closely integrated fabrics of human motive and idiosyncrasy, lightened by flashes of observation, here and there warmed by the glow of feeling. Some of them are treated in the form of tragedy, when the pressure of great and primitive forces proves too much for ignorant men and women. Such is *Fuhrmann Henschel*, 1898, the story of an ignorant man caught in the mesh of pas-

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sion and conscience. Such too is *Rose Bernd*, 1903, the tragedy of an ignorant girl. But Hauptmann was too consistent a naturalist to concern himself entirely with the mad lusts of life. He was aware no less of the closely knit fabric of its petty strands, and of the craft and guile that in little men take the place of strength and courage. From this latter material come some of the highest forms of comic naturalism. There is a strain of picaresque humor in these studies of low life in town and country, along with satire and a constructive economy. Such are *Der Biberpelz* (*The Beaver Coat*), 1893, a thieves' comedy; *Der rote Hahn* (*The Conflagration*), 1901, and *Die Ratten* (*The Rats*), 1911.

Die Weber The greatest of Hauptmann's plays, and one of the greatest of modern dramas is *Die Weber*, 1893. In this play naturalism is carried to its highest reaches in observation of life, in impassivity, in consistency of vision, and in a never-flagging vitality. *Die Weber* is neither tragedy, comedy, nor purpose play. It has no hero, or rather its hero is the mass of the people. It has no central action. And yet it is firm, perfect in balance, universal in sympathy. More than any play of modern times — perhaps one may say of all times — it combines the sense of the magnitudes of life with its everyday realities. Hauptmann's achievement is even more marked in that his naturalism is not applied to contemporary materials, but to the events and human materials of two generations before. It was therefore naturalism applied to historical material. *Die Weber* was published in 1892 in two editions, one completely in dialect, the other made legible by a transcription to modern High German.

Summary of Hauptmann's naturalism In the field of naturalism only one playwright achieves levels equal to those attained by Hauptmann. This is Chekhov, who in three or four Russian plays, applies the method of naturalism to the treatment of the drama of highly subtle intellectuals, and with a synthetic artistry excelling even that of Hauptmann. In the zones of a hard and impassive artistry of external values the only modern playwrights who can compare with Hauptmann are Gorky and Galsworthy and Heijermans. And these are not as consistent in achievement as is Hauptmann. Hauptmann's command of naturalism is revealed both in what he discards and in what he accepts. He discards the artifices and traditions of plot, the contrapuntals of manipulated arrangement. He bases his structure on a steady and keen-eyed observation of life's shows. The key to his naturalism is a knowledge of character within and without, and he knows all the indexes and manifestations of character as well as its motives, impulses, and inversions. In Hauptmann's hands the naturalistic play ceases to be a literary drama created of rhetorical phrases and threaded through with ideas. It becomes a synthetic arrangement, a *composition* in character values. The first dramatist to handle character in its own, as distinguished from its rhetorical qualities, was the Russian Ostrovsky. Character in being has its own impressive methods of expression and communication. Of these, words are one of the minor and least trustworthy. Others are less vocal, less articulate, more revealing — the silences, hesitations, dialects, personal eccentricities, and inversions of speech. Outside these there are the deeper intimations of meaning and character that come

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through subconscious channels. Naturally enough these expressive agencies have not been catalogued. Their nature and scope are not completely understood. But no naturalistic dramatist can afford to ignore them. It is to Hauptmann's credit that he was more successful in the employment of these uncatalogued agencies of communication than any other dramatist. No playwright of modern times has made himself a better master of the innumerable agencies of character revelation than has Hauptmann.

*Constructive
qualities of
naturalism*

But Hauptmann's achievements as a naturalist do not stop with a command of character and realistic detail. Hauptmann achieves in his naturalistic plays a unity and an integrity which in naturalism is the rarest quality. For here we reach again the old question of selection and rejection. In romantic plays, and in those plays which are bolstered by an abstruse idea, selection and rejection are not difficult. But in the naturalistic play, which has all reality for its matter, selection is not so easy. And yet selection is necessary. No guide can be found in criticism or rules. It must be found in the creative conception of the author's brain, in his ability to see the masses of life in their relative integrity, and so to present them. For the naturalist truth lies in the relation between events; they must be presented without distortion and without over-emphasis. In his handling of the relativities of events Hauptmann has shown the power of the composer of music, of the artist in design. In his work stability, impassivity, and a suggestive lightness are joined. Nowhere are the changed values that he introduces into dramatic art better shown

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than in his handling of conflict. In the modern theater conflict has been externalized, formalized out of likeness to itself. Hauptmann scatters and conceals the conflict, makes it immanent and universal.

Hauptmann and the free imagination So far did Hauptmann carry the practice of naturalism that to many it appears that he was at heart a naturalist. Nothing could be further from the truth. He was led to naturalism by the same forces that later led him to other forms of expression, namely, the need to give voice to the soul's cry, to make the deeper aspiration apprehensible and realizable, and to create out of the raw materials of life a thing of beauty. When the time came that naturalism no longer served his needs he broke through into forms of the purest imagination. In spite of the consistency of his naturalism Hauptmann had never entirely lost touch with the impulse to lyrical expression. The love scene in the midst of squalor in *Vor Sonnenaufgang* is of a nature not all of a piece with naturalism. And from his earliest days Hauptmann turned aside from objective naturalism to the treatment of subjective themes. To him the two worlds of the objective and subjective were not separate and distinct. They were forever intermingled.

Between reality and dream It is this sense of the identity in duality of life that leads Hauptmann to the composition of his plays dealing with a strange world lying between reality and dream; *Hanneles Himmelfahrt*, 1893, *Elga*, 1905, *Schluck und Jau*, 1900, and *Die Jungfern vom Bischofsberg*, 1907.

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Die Versunkene Glocke

The first play in which Hauptmann broke entirely free from the methods of naturalism was *Die versunkene Glocke* (*The Sunken Bell*), 1896. Here again the author's integrity of method was revealed. The play is primarily the expression of the author's soul need. He had been pondering deeply on the problems of the artist. His sympathetic soul had been torn between the demands of higher vision and nearer duty. Such a theme as this cannot be treated in the naturalistic form. Hauptmann employs the methods of the German *märchen* drama for the expression of social motives and the probing of individual suffering.

The new historical psychology in drama

We now turn to one of the most considerable of Hauptmann's contributions to the modern technique of the theater. We have seen that in *Die Weber* Hauptmann had performed the difficult feat of treating a period two generations removed in the past by the naturalistic method. He now asked himself why it would not be possible to do the same thing for a period much further removed in history. It was not so much the surface of realism in prose form that he sought, as a psychology that would be intuitive, detailed and in tune with the temper of mind of past periods. The problem he posed himself was very far from that of the romanticists. These had been content to treat the past under conventionalized symbols which brought the past back in an illusory form. Why, asked Hauptmann, should not the closely knit methods of modern literary imagination be employed to bring back in very truth the forms and pressures and motives of other days? In other words, why should not observation and

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psychological insight be employed for the evocation of the past? The Goncourts had had a specific value for the term "contemporary," meaning that which is intensely realized. Intense realization had come to be the keynote of modern drama. It was but a step to the application of this intense realization, this corrective vision, to the traditions of the past. Other playwrights of our time have had the same thought, notably Strindberg, Shaw, and Hofmannsthal. None has done more than Hauptmann to put the idea to practice. The first play in which Hauptmann attempts on an ambitious scale this historic evocation, *Florian Geyer*, 1895, was not a success. Nevertheless Hauptmann returned to the same type of writing in *Der arme Heinrich*, 1902, based on the legend of Heinrich of Aue. Again he treats historical subjects in *Keiser Karls Geisel*, 1908, *Griselda*, 1909, *Der Bogen des Odysseus*, and *Der weisse Heiland*, 1919.

In the above study no mention was made of the *Commemoration Masque*, 1913, a majestic conception in the manner of Hardy's *The Dynasts*, *Und Pippa Tanzt*, 1906, a "symbol of beauty" distantly suggestive of Browning, the *Winterballade*, 1917, inspired by Selma Lägerlöf, *Indipohdi*, 1920, *Peter Brauer*, 1921, or the dramatic fragment, *Helios*. Hauptmann's latest plays are *Veland*, 1925, and *Dorothea Augermann*, 1926.

Summary Gerhart Hauptmann is the supreme poet of contemporary Germany, and one of the great masters in the interpretation of our times in terms of beauty. In his work the following qualities are notable, and a recognition of them is necessary to an understanding of the achievements of the poet:

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- (1) The poet's modernity of conception in the sense of a sympathetic quickness of reaction to all the impulses and pains of the world;
- (2) In his mature work a complete lack of hampering controls of convention; in his plays substance and form are imaginatively identified;
- (3) A sculptural quality of imagination;
- (4) A subjective-objectivity that causes him to employ his own experiences poetically without the intrusion of personal animus.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

The Marionette Idea — Actor and Dramatic Art — Ideas of Gordon Craig — Symbolism and Naturalism — Verhaeren — Plays for a Puppet Theater — Second Period — Sources of Maeterlinck's Art — Maeterlinck as a Playwright — The New Stage Art

In *Chief Contemporary Dramatists, First Series:*

Pelléas et Mélisande, by Maurice Maeterlinck; translated by Richard Hovey.

*Tendency
toward
simplicity of
medium*

THOSE who have followed the tendencies in dramatic composition as outlined in the preceding pages have found amid the many confused gropings of the theater a clear tendency toward the elimination of the crudities of popular drama. Playwrights had been searching for a simpler, more sensitive medium than any to which the theater had been accustomed. This means perhaps that they were seeking to associate the drama with the soul rather than with the senses; that they were seeking again to make an art of what had become merely a craft. Heretofore the closest associations of the drama had been with the narrative art of the novel or the epic. The drama now seeks to approximate in delicacy and *nuance* the expressiveness of poetry and music.

*New planes
of dramatic
action*

From these facts issued events of the greatest importance to the theater. These fall under two heads:

- (1) Drama was made to cover directly, rather than by narrative indirection, mental states and spiritual

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- conditions lying behind the planes of consciousness;
(2) In order to meet these conditions an entirely new theory of dramatic production developed.

The drama of overtones We have seen that Ibsen in his later plays had found his way through naturalism to a point at which there was more drama in what the words and action implied than in what they directly expressed. Ibsen's employment of dramatic overtones is one of the most important of the newer discoveries in the ancient crafts of the theater. It immensely broadened the scope of dramatic action and deepened its suggestiveness. It did this by a process of elimination, simplification, and suggestion rather than by those more explicit and articulate means which were the stock in trade of the older drama. Its chief intent was the uncovering of the deeper soul states that do not ordinarily express themselves by external means. In effect Ibsen had discovered for himself and applied to drama the method of the symbolists. In the evocation of the overtone he was followed by Chekhov, Hauptmann, Barker, and other naturalists of the more subtle persuasion. It remained for Maeterlinck to elevate the symbolic idea into a principle of dramatic technique.

The marionette idea Any discussion of the employment of symbolism for the revelation of deeper psychic values brings us immediately to the consideration of the mediums normally employed in the theater for the interpretation of the author's conceptions. It is a truism that in any art the medium of expression practically dictates the standards and formulas of the art. The very

limitations of the medium may conceivably be employed for the enrichment of the artist's work by increasing ingenuities of research. But there are some qualities the material should always possess, without which no art in a true sense is possible. The expressive medium should be pure; and the expressive medium should be constant. Unless the medium be pure it will never adapt itself perfectly to the modeling of the artist's hand. It will always at some point or other intervene and impede the artist's conception and its accomplishment. Unless the medium be constant no art is possible because the end is always dependent on chance. Among the mediums of the art of the stage certain ones are relatively constant and pure. These are form and color, movement and sound; in other words, the mediums of the sister arts of sculpture and painting, the dance and music. Because these mediums are relatively constant the tendency has been, as the practice of the theater became more artistic, to shift the practice of dramatic art away from the inconstant toward the more constant mediums.

*The actor
and dra-
matic art*

Among the mediums of expression of the art of the theater there is one, and this a very important one, which is neither pure (in the artistic sense) nor constant. This medium is identified with human beings, with actors, who are in the last analysis necessary to the author in the completion of his play as a work of art. A little thought will show that it is impossible that the human actor shall supply those qualities of transparent purity and constancy of medium that are necessary to the highest art. Every actor brings to his interpretation that complex of qualities known as person-

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ality. This personality may, but usually does not, adapt itself perfectly to the interpretation of the author's conception. The actor therefore introduces into the production an element of chance, of accident, which is inconsistent with the nature of art. There is nothing new in these ideas, or at any rate in the practice of stage art that they imply. At various times, and in various countries, in the past history of the theater, the expressive medium of the actor has been identified with figures which were constant and entirely flexible in the hands of the artist. These were identified with:

- (1) The system of masques employed in the Greek and other primitive theaters;
- (2) The system of puppets employed in primitive and folk theaters;
- (3) The system of formalized costume, make-up and gesture employed in the *commedia dell' arte*.

The man who, with Maeterlinck, is chiefly responsible for the injection of an absolute principle into the contemporary theories of dramatic art is Edward Gordon Craig (1872-). Though he was the son of Ellen Terry, and himself went on the stage when he was thirteen years old, Craig approaches the theater not through acting but through the art of design. At 25 he deserted the stage for drawing and wood engraving. His theatrical conceptions are influenced by the austere principles of line. He has put his ideas into effect in various productions and also in his school established at Florence in 1913. But his chief work has been the diffusion of his ideas among students and stage workers. These ideas call for purer mediums of expression, for a synthetic art of the stage, for the dominance of the creative intelligence of the director. Craig holds that the drama must become dramatic again; it

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must present the soul of life and not its superficial presentment. He is unalterably against realism. There is no alternative to suggestion. He would return vision to drama. Like many fundamental visionaries Craig's force is destructive before it is constructive. After the contemporary theater of naturalism is destroyed he would rebuild a theater of the fundamental elements of nature.

Maeterlinck and symbolism Even before Gordon Craig had begun to busy himself with his theory of puppets, and the depersonalized stage, Maurice Maeterlinck had begun to write plays designed for a purer and more constant artistry of expression than the human actor can supply. Maeterlinck was drawn into his experiments through his interest in the symbolist poets. Of all subjects in art that of symbolism is perhaps the most confused in discussion. At this point it seems appropriate to call attention to the real identity of interests between the naturalists and the symbolists. Both rested on much the same materials; they differed only in the application of a different system of approach. Both were aware of the logical, pseudo-scientific temper of the age. Naturalism stripped reality to its essentials, discarded the formulas which had acted as veils upon the real world, sought to make the event speak for itself in its own language. Symbolism did the same through a purer and more quintessential method. Where materialism evoked the material as a corrective of its false appearance and false representation, symbolism denied matter entirely in behalf of a deeper verity. The methods and results of both were strikingly similar. It has often been shown, by Villiers de l'Isle Adam, by Balzac, by Flaubert, the Goncourts, Ibsen, and Strindberg, that one stage in intensity beyond

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naturalism lands one in symbolism. This was the stage reached by Maeterlinck during the earlier periods of his creative career. It is not without significance that in the entire list of contemporary dramatists it is Maeterlinck alone who can be considered to possess the scientific spirit.

*Maeterlinck
and Ver-
haeren*

Like Ibsen, Maeterlinck came from a small nation which had not before made a place for itself in the European theater. Again like Ibsen, Maeterlinck appeared at a moment at which his home land was first becoming conscious of a literary aspiration. And like Ibsen, he employed this fresh national consciousness greatly to enrich the drama of Europe.

If we are to compare Maeterlinck with Ibsen we must class Verhaeren with Björnson. Emile Verhaeren (1855-1916) was never strictly a man of the theater. He was a poet who employed dramatic form to glorify his native Flanders. His poem *Les Flamandes* is a depiction of life in the Belgian countryside. His chief plays are: *Les Aubes*, 1898, *Le Cloître*, 1900, *Philippe II*, 1904, *Hélène de Sparte*, 1912.

*Sketch of
Maeter-
linck's life*

Maurice Maeterlinck was born 29 August, 1862, at Ghent, the capital of the province of East Flanders. Educated under Jesuit monks at the College of Saint Barbe, he was intended for the law, but a youthful visit to Paris, where he met the symbolist poets, turned his mind to poetry. With other young aspirants Maeterlinck became interested in *La Jeune Belgique* which had raised the standard of a national literature, and established with them a short-lived review,

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La Pléiade. Maeterlinck was for long a student and disciple of mystical philosophy. In 1889 he published a volume of verse, *Serres Chaudes*. The appearance of his first plays was extravagantly hailed. In 1896 he left Belgium for Paris; later he established his home in the Abbaye de Saint Wandrille.

Scientist and mystic No view of Maeterlinck is complete that does not give consideration to his place as a scientist and mystic. In Maeterlinck's case science and mysticism are not antipathetic. He has the qualities of microscopic observation, patience, a generalizing imagination, and an entire lack of preconception. His works of scientific observation are said to be models of their class. And Maeterlinck's mystical works are undertaken in a scientific spirit. Mysticism is based first of all upon a body of doctrine. Maeterlinck made himself a master of the Bible of the mystics, including the works of Plato, Plotinus, Novalis, the admirable Ruysbroeck, and Coleridge. But mysticism is more than a body of doctrine. Like theology it is a means of grace. As such it must be translated to the terms of contemporary life. Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Stéphane Mallarmé, Arthur Rimbaud, had done much to bring about the symbolist movement in literature. No man has done as much as Maeterlinck to make these mystical zones of experience apprehensible to the world.

Plays for a puppet theater It is not difficult to see how Maeterlinck's theories of puppet production make themselves useful to his mystical ideals. His plays fall into two groups. The first group is entirely

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made up of plays composed for production under the marionette convention. All of these plays represent "a world beyond the world." Soul, death, love, fear, disembodied states compose the material of this drama. In these plays drama is depersonalized, set in the larger stage of the cosmos. The ordinary clashes of will of the social drama are dispensed with. A new idea of Fate has intervened, a Fate that enmeshes all, enervates the will, is identified with all, against which there is no rebellion. In these plays there is no clash, no climax, little progression. It is a timeless world.

The plays of this period include (dates are those of composition): *La Princesse Maleine*, 1889, *L'Intruse*, 1890, *Les Aveugles*, 1890, *Les Sept Princesses*, 1891, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, 1893, *L'Intérieur*, 1894, *Alladine et Pálomydes*, 1894, *La Mort de Tintagiles*, 1894, *Aglavaine et Sélysette*, 1896.

Maeterlinck's second period The dramaturgy of Maeterlinck's first period represents the last word in the refinement of dramatic action to the purposes of the soul. Maeterlinck had achieved at one leap a revolutionary artistry. Beyond the limits reached in this first group of plays it was impossible to go in the further attenuation of dramatic technique. In spite of the spiritual qualities of his genius Maeterlinck had always been a man of a vigorous and healthy mind. Within a few years he had reached an impasse in his art. Either he must, like Strindberg, fray his art into tatters in pursuing his vision beyond the limits of the senses and reason, or he must turn back toward the more normal interests of every day. Influences that came upon him from the

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outside, no less than the promptings of his own nature, led him back from metaphysical interests to the interests of the real world. In 1896 Maeterlinck expresses his own sense of this change. "I do not know whether I am doing better or worse; all that I do know is that I want to express things more and more simple, things more and more human, less and less brilliant, more and more true." And he refers to his early plays as written in "the disquiet of a mind that has given itself wholly to mystery." Already in *Aglavaine et Sélysette* he had come to a new note in his work. The mood of overpowering fate had passed away. Aglavaine is a heroine, a woman of will, self-directing and self-confident. In *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* there appears a suggestion that the author is looking backward and renouncing his older ideals in favor of more vigorous ones. Of the six wives of Bluebeard five have names of Maeterlinck's heroines. These are the five childlike wives, Mélisande, Alladine, Ygraine, Bellangère, and Sélysette. One alone represents a strong and independent temper. This is Ariane. In the plays of the second period we have works in which, while not surrendering interest in the speculative and the spiritual, Maeterlinck approaches more nearly to the practice of the conventional theater. Among these plays are *Monna Vanna*, 1902, *Joyzelle*, 1903, *Ariane et Barbe-bleue*, 1907, *L'Oiseau bleu*, 1908, *Marie Magdeleine*, 1910, *Sœur Béatrice*, 1910, *Les Fiançailles*, 1918, *Le Bourgmestre de Stilemonde*, 1918; *Le Miracle de Saint Antoine*, written 1906, acknowledged 1918.

L'Oiseau bleu Of all Maeterlinck's plays the one which offers promise of the longest life is *L'Oiseau bleu* (*The Blue Bird*). In this play Maeterlinck gives a

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crisp modern employment to the fairy play. Among the forms of stage romanticism of the nineteenth century the fairy play had enjoyed an unusual vitality. The chief writer of the fairy play had been the German dramatist Tieck. Some of his plays had been derived from folk-lore, some from invention. Others to employ the form were Oehlenschläger, de la Motte Fouqué, Novalis, Fulda, Sudermann, Hauptmann, and Barrie. *The Blue Bird* is distinguished among all plays of the type by its lusty tone, its wit, its lack of sentimentality, and its intellectual vitality. The first production of *The Blue Bird* was made by the Moscow Art Theater, September 30, 1908.

Sources of Maeterlinck's art In the case of an artist of so individual a genius as Maeterlinck, it is interesting to inquire as to the sources of his art. More than any other playwright who has had an influence on the theater of his time Maeterlinck's art is derived from sources outside the theater. Perhaps for this reason his work is a focal point for the most speculative literary and theatrical interests of the last half-century. Maeterlinck's literary and artistic interests were many. In introducing him to England, Archer called the author of *La Princesse Maleine* "a Webster who had read Alfred de Musset." In the suggestion of Maeterlinck's Elizabethan indebtedness we have the best illumination of his art. Maeterlinck himself told Huret that it was his desire to write "a play in the Shakespearean manner for a marionette theater." His interest in the Elizabethan theater is indicated by his translation of Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* under the title of *Annabelle*, and by his translation of *Macbeth*. There are reflections of *Hamlet* in *La Prin-*

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cesse Maleine, of *The Tempest* in *Joyzelle*. Maeterlinck's indebtedness to the symbolists has been mentioned. There is also an Arthurian note in his plays, some of this derived through a study of Walter Crane's drawings. As in the case of many dramatists of first rank, Maeterlinck is prone to use or adapt old stories. *Pelléas et Mélisande* resembles the Francesca da Rimini story; *Monna Vanna* resembles Browning's *Luria* and the story of Judith. *Sœur Béatrice* is taken from John Davidson's *The Ballad of a Nun*; *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* from a fairy tale by Charles Perrault. *L'Oiseau bleu* is to be compared with Richard Dehmel's *Fitzbutse*; the symbol of the "blue bird" occurs in a story by Madame d'Aulnoy.

Maeterlinck as a playwright In spite of the universal success of *L'Oiseau bleu* and the qualified success of *Monna Vanna*, it is very largely upon the work of his first period that Maeterlinck's reputation as a creative influence in the modern theater rests. In the product of this period we have not only a body of dramatic writing of an absolute integrity and originality; as it occurs Maeterlinck left for this body of work a mass of commentary and interpretation that has been of great importance both in the explanation of his work and in inspiring and stimulating other playwrights.

Maeterlinck's opinions on playwriting are contained in his essays, *Wisdom and Destiny*, *The Treasure of the Humble*, *The Buried Temple*, and *The Double Garden*. Summing up his qualities as a playwright in this period, we find that the first and indispensable quality of his drama was that it was a drama of soul. Speaking of Ibsen's *Master Builder*, Maeterlinck wrote, "Hilda and

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Solness are the first characters in drama who feel, for an instant, that they are living in the atmosphere of Soul." This is the world that he would represent in his plays. It follows from his interest in soul that Maeterlinck was not concerned with the external conflicts of will and passion that make up the average play. And he was not interested in character in the accepted sense of the term. For these plays truth lay behind characters. "In these plays faith is held in enormous powers, invisible and fatal. No one knows their intentions, but the spirit of the drama assumes they are malevolent, attentive to all our actions, hostile to smiles, to life, to peace, to happiness." It is from the necessity of presenting this esoteric world that Maeterlinck is drawn to the employment of the purer medium of the puppet. From this necessity was drawn, too, Maeterlinck's employment of silence and implicit suggestion as a complement to the use of words. In his view language had become weary. And so he employed words sparingly as if the characters themselves begrudged the handling of such crude coins. "The astonished repeating of words which gives the personages the appearance of rather deaf somnambulists forever being shocked out of a painful dream . . . this want of promptitude in hearing and replying is intimately connected with their psychology and the somewhat haggard idea they have of the universe." The "interior dialogue" of Maeterlinck is marked by pauses, gestures, and other indirect means of expression. The dialogue itself is trivial but it contains intimations of deep meaning.

*Maeterlinck
and music*

No view of Maeterlinck's art would be complete that did not give regard to its asso-

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ciations with music. A French critic, a friend of Mallarmé's, has written, "What was baptized Symbolism is summed up very simply in the intention common to several families of poets to get back from music what belonged to them." By the testimony of many critics, notably Ernest Newman, this is Maeterlinck's chief contribution to the æsthetics of the play. "He, too, like Wagner, wants to show the heart of a tragic situation without the customary tedious cataloguing of all its limbs."

Maeterlinck and the new stage art Maeterlinck was the first playwright to break entirely with the old conventions of theatrical production. His earlier plays implied not only a new system of production, but a new type of art organization as well. For this reason he was for many years the patron saint of the art theaters. His plays were produced at the Théâtre Libre, the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, the Künstler Theater at Munich, the Moscow Art Theater, the London Stage Society, Paul Fort's Théâtre d'Art, the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiennes, the Sezessionsbühne, the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, the Deutsches Theater and the New Theater of New York. He has had his contests with the censor. And he has been accepted by the Comédie Française. While few have followed his models in playwriting, he has been a tower of strength to artists in all the arts. Music was composed for *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* by Paul Dukas; for *La Mort de Tintagiles* by Charles Martin Loeffler; for *Monna Vanna* by M. Février; for *Pelléas et Mélisande* by Claude Debussy. His influence on Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann, d'Annunzio, Claudel, and Yeats is in certain

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plays clearly marked. Maeterlinck's career ends on a note of suspended judgment. The choice which he does not seem ready to make is thus stated by Yeats: "There are two ways before literature — upward into ever-growing subtlety, with Verhaeren, with Mallarmé, with Maeterlinck, until at last, it may be, a new agreement among refined and studious men gives birth to a new passion, and what seems literature becomes religion; or downward, taking the soul with us until all is simplified and solidified again."

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CHAPTER TWELVE

AUGUST STRINDBERG

Strindberg and Naturalism — Anti-Romanticist — Misogyny — Variety and Fecundity of Work — Mediæval and Legendary Plays — One-Act Plays — Naturalistic Plays — Toward an Open Technique in the Theater — Expressionism — The Twentieth-Century Theater

In *Chief Contemporary Dramatists, First Series:*

Fadren, by August Strindberg; translated as *The Father* by N. Erichsen.

*A prophetic
genius* OF August Strindberg a German critic has said that he stands with one foot on naturalism and another on expressionism. This seems an appropriate symbol for the Swedish genius who, bestriding his age, gazed with prophetic but distracted eye down corridors that are closed to normal vision. With many aspects of Strindberg's work it will be impossible to deal in a short study. For such a study the time is not yet ripe. All that can be done is to indicate some of the outstanding tendencies of his work as playwright, and leave for later time the full evaluation of his contributions to psychology and to theater art.

*Strindberg
and natural-
ism* In studying the work of a man so various, so perplexing, as Strindberg, it is important that we find a fixed point of departure. This fixed point is found in naturalism. To all appearances Strindberg's early work was based upon a naturalism at once intense and precise. He himself claimed to be a naturalist. But by his own definition, as well as by his own practice, it is apparent that Strindberg's naturalism

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went beyond the representation of external fact, or the cutting of a slice of life. Strindberg employed the naturalistic method always for the purpose of uncovering a deeper reality that only the psychologist or prescient artist can discover. He was not interested in making a composition of external values. He was interested in breaking these down, distilling from them their essence. As Strindberg became older he discarded restraining form entirely. He distrusted and despised the symbolism of surfaces. Dispensing with the entire theory of drama which had been built up on the idea of the congruity of the outer and inner life he created his play entirely out of the inner life.

*Advisable
attitude
toward
Strindberg*

For us as students of drama the important feature of Strindberg's work is the craft with which he mastered the various creative conceptions of his advancing art. We must view with suspicion the charges of madness and neuropathology that have been brought against him. Already these charges are passing away. Similar charges were brought against Wagner, Ibsen, Zola, Nietzsche, and Tolstoy. They are the last refuge of ignorance and prejudice. If it is eventually found that Strindberg was in fact mad it will be important to associate this fact with his achievements. But his achievements can neither be explained nor destroyed by charging him with insanity. We must be ready to learn that Strindberg was both more imaginative and more clairvoyant than his age. What his contemporaries called his madness may have been largely his genius. And yet, for the purposes of contemporary understanding many of the features, com-

monly classed under "the personal equation" are interesting and important. Whether Strindberg was pathological or not it was what appeared to be pathological to his contemporaries that motivated his playwriting. Among these features Strindberg's extreme powers of self-analysis, self-identification with external events, and self-flagellation take important place.

Strindberg as anti-romanticist Ibsen and Zola, among others, had revolted against the ideal of romanticism while continuing many of its processes. Strindberg was vigorously, and as a matter of inner impulse, anti-romantic. By this is meant that he distrusted romantic motivations and turned against these instinctively and bitterly. Not only did he react against them; there was in his reactions an element of fear that indicated that in the deeper caverns of his mind he himself was capable of being moved by sympathy, prompted by the urgings of pure emotion, and was subject to the bitter pangs of disillusionment. Strindberg's skepticism, his mordant humor, his self-searching are but reflexes of his passionate power for feeling, a power that gained by repression. It is because he finds within himself all the sources of the romanticism he distrusts that he turns upon himself a pitiless probing and self-torture that approaches the unrelieved mental terror of the flagellants. He was of a restless, adventurous, and exploring mind; never more so than when exploring in himself the nerve-ganglia of the modern. To the neural vivisections of the modern scientist he brought none of the compensations of philosophy, of religion, even of enthusiasm. He differed from dramatists before him in that he was not a lover, or

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a respecter, of men. In his personal relations he was sensitive, suspicious, and misanthropic. He created his plays by the same pattern. In searching for explanations of human phenomena he always accepted the most painful and the most pessimistic. Strindberg as man and artist represented a growing temper in modern life. In his ability to follow with his art the ultimate throbbings of his own pain he immensely extended the domains of the practice of dramatic art. Incidentally he broke his own mind.

Strindberg's misogyny Nothing would be more short-sighted than to look to Strindberg for a consistent or significant philosophy. Even more than Ibsen his work was complete in dramatizing the contemporary clashes of thought and passion. He had the power to raise subterranean social and biological motives to the surface, isolate them, set them to mimic war. He was the discoverer of the suppressed and the subconscious, their adapter to the explicit purposes of drama. But while Ibsen had a set of underlying convictions, rules of procedure, Strindberg had no doctrine, no evangel, no consistent temper even, save the pressure of his own idiosyncrasy. This fact quite invalidates as philosophy Strindberg's misogyny. It does not, of course, invalidate this as material for drama. Strindberg's warnings against women were derived from his own interpretation of his own experiences and from a petulant reaction against the plays of Ibsen. There is no evidence whatever that Strindberg understood Ibsen's position on women, or had any conception of how near the great Norwegian came at the end of his life to his own position.

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Strindberg's doctrine of the marauding female is but a personal and narrow dramatization of the theme that Shaw handled with greater understanding and humor under the head of the "Life Force." It is important that we clarify our minds regarding Strindberg the thinker in order the better to understand Strindberg the dramatist. As a practitioner of the craft of the theater Strindberg stands in first rank among the playwrights of all time. We must not look to such a man for a great freight of explicit ideas.

*Sketch of
life of
Strindberg* August Strindberg (1849-1912) was born at Stockholm and educated at Upsala. As a young man he was successively schoolmaster, actor, journalist; from 1874 to 1882 he had a place in the Royal Library at Stockholm. He was always interested in the study of out-of-the-way subjects, and gathered a wide knowledge of such diverse sciences as chemistry, physics, and Chinese literature. Meanwhile he was turning to writing of an acutely bitter description, attacking in turn all classes from which he might have hoped to obtain support. His fascinated hatred of woman is always on display. In *The Red Room*, 1879; *The New Kingdom*, 1882; *Married*, 1884; and *The Son of a Servant*, 1886, he reveals his peculiar attitude toward his time and his powers of marvelously intense realization. Through all his life Strindberg was a tireless experimenter. He threw himself into all experience, into anti-feminist movements, into strange alchemic speculations on the nature of matter. He lived much in foreign countries. He was married three times. At various times he had mental breakdowns which were followed by periods of

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extraordinary clarity. His collected works comprise 115 works, including plays, novels, essays, and poems.

Types of plays As a dramatist Strindberg displays an extraordinary fecundity. It is characteristic of this fecundity that his plays represent no one style and cannot readily be classified. His plays number fifty-six, and run from one-acters to trilogies, the technique ranging from hard realism to sheer phantasmagoria. For a man of impressible nature Strindberg displays few theatrical influences. The impulses that come to him from outside are rather stimuli to his thinking, irritating points of departure for creative work than models. Strindberg quite fails to show those external influences from the well-made play, and the problem play, that usually render classification easy. His various phases are influenced rather by pressures of his own interests than by considerations of dramatic form.

Mediæval and legendary plays Though Strindberg is best known as a naturalist, and for those plays that go "beyond naturalism," at least half of his output was made up of plays of a historic or romantic imagination. Of this type he wrote: (1) historical romances; (2) biographical dramas of the new historical psychology; (3) fairy plays; (4) symbolic and religious plays. After writing his first play, *In Rome*, produced at the Royal Theater in Stockholm when he was twenty-one, Strindberg turned to the composition of historical and legendary works. Chief among these was a play called *The Heric*, which was written in 1872, rejected by the Royal Theater, frequently rewritten, and was finally published

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in verse form in 1877 under the title of *Master Olof*. First produced in 1878 this play reached the Theater Royal in 1890 and has been recognized as one of the great plays of modern times. In this play Strindberg anticipates Hauptmann, Shaw, and others in applying a modern psychology to an old story. Also in the early legendary group belong the comedies *The Secret of the Guild*, 1880, *Bengt's Wife*, 1882, and *The Journey of Lucky Peter*, 1882. In his last phase Strindberg returned to works of a mystical romantic imagination, sometimes with a Maeterlinckian flavor, as in *Swan-white*, 1902, sometimes of a highly fantastic Oriental cast, as in *The Slipper of Abu Casein*, 1908. In these plays there is a strain of the mystical and esoteric which is the dominant motive in *The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 1892, *Toward Damascus*, 1898, *Advent*, 1899, *Easter*, 1901, *The Crown Bride*, 1902, *The Great Highway*, 1909. In an important group the analysis of exotic spiritual values is carried on in the form of historical-biographical plays, in which Strindberg returns to the principles of his first great work *Master Olof*. Among these plays are *The Saga of the Folkungs*, 1899, *Gustavus Vasa*, 1899, *Eric XIV*, 1899, *Gustavus Adolphus*, 1899, *Engelbrecht*, 1901, *Charles XII*, 1901, *Gustavus III*, 1903.

*Beginnings
in naturalis-
tic drama*

Like Maeterlinck, Strindberg was both a scientist and a mystic. His science was of that experimental and adventurous type that consisted in sudden sallies into outlying regions of physical speculation. As a playwright he was likewise by turns adventurous and closely analytical. Strindberg's naturalistic period begins in the late seventies and

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is without doubt in part impelled by reaction to the vogue of Ibsen's plays and ideas. With Ibsen's ideas Strindberg had no sympathy; he spoke of the dramatist as "the Norwegian bluestocking." And many of Strindberg's plays are composed to correct that wave of sentimental feminism that followed the production of *A Doll's House*. The technique that Strindberg handles during this period is his own. It is less influenced by theatrical formulas than that of any playwright of modern times, though the themes are continually derived from reaction to literary forces. In this group Strindberg consistently makes his pattern to suit his cloth. He was one of the creators of the modern vogue of the one-act play.

The technique of the one-act play, of course, differs widely from that of the longer play. It is more condensed; it depends more upon characterization; upon immediate strokes. In France and England, the one-act play, in the form of a vaudeville, had long served as a curtain raiser. A new era came in with the short and graceful plays of Carmontelle, Musset, and Feuillet, and the *Quart d'Heure* of Guiche and Lavedan. After the Théâtre Libre these had been hardened into the fragments of the "rosse" schools that made the Grand Guignol famous. Strindberg discards artifices and goes back to the primitive theories of the Greek play which was built in a continuant action varied by interludes. The plan of Interludes Strindberg himself tried out in *Miss Julia*. Strindberg's chief one-act plays are *Miss Julia*, 1888, *The Stronger*, 1890, *Pariah*, 1890, *Samum*, 1890.

*Strindberg's
naturalistic
plays*

It was in *The Father* that Strindberg started his career as a militant naturalist with a new method and a new message. This play which

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seeks to present a new theory of sex-relationships is a study in neuro-pathology. It is Strindberg's first draft in dramatic form of a theme to which he returned again and again throughout his life. In *The Father* the problem of individual integrity and responsibility is pushed one step further than Ibsen had carried it in *Ghosts*. We have seen that in this play Ibsen had reached the point at which he recognized the individual's responsibility for the coming generations. In *The Father* the power to create the child is shown to be the sign and index of true individuality, the indispensable quantum of integrity. No man lives to himself. Every man seeks to live beyond himself. And by an inexorable law of the nature of sex, Strindberg holds, the power to live beyond self, and therefore to achieve true integrity and individuality is lodged in the woman who bears the child. Of the tragedy in human relationships, and particularly in the life of the man, involved in this theory Strindberg is fully aware. He makes it the motive of one of the most stirring works of psychological insight of modern times. The subject itself is not one that permits extended discussion here. It is one to which Strindberg returns, with variations, in *Miss Julia*, 1888, *Comrades*, 1888, *Creditors*, 1890, *The Link*, 1897, *There are Crimes and Crimes*, 1899; and in *The Dream Play* the theme appropriately enough leads beyond the verge of disciplined reason into new forms of an anarchistic technique.

Strindberg's theories of naturalism As has been said, Strindberg is to be considered a naturalist only under severe restrictions. If by naturalism we mean balance, impassivity, and a consistent external view of life, Strind-

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berg was not a naturalist. And yet in his playwriting he brought into practice some principles that greatly extended the theory of naturalism. Strindberg's theories of naturalism are expressed in his Preface to *Miss Julia*, a broadside against the critics of *The Father*. Some of these ideas we have met elsewhere. They call for the abolition of footlights, changes in the relation of audience and actors, and other expedients to bring intimacy in the production. Others call for the elimination of artificialities from the construction of the play, arbitrary limits of length and of act divisions. In introducing flexibility of construction into the naturalistic play, Strindberg went far toward destroying the naturalistic form and toward preparing the way for expressionism. Another of Strindberg's theories was that of irregular, broken dialogue, instead of symmetrical or mathematical dialogue. Strindberg seeks to give to action an impressionistic asymmetry. He desires to "let the brains of men work unhindered." Of even greater significance are his theories of synthetic personality. This idea which was first conceived naturalistically came to be the basis for Strindberg's most searching forays into the subconscious.

His ideas of personality Strindberg looked upon personality, not as an integral product of the individual will, but as an agglomeration of impressions. "A personality does not develop from itself, but out of each soul it comes in contact with it sucks a drop, just as the bee gathers its honey from a million flowers, giving it forth eventually as its own." If personality is not all of a piece neither are motives all of a piece. No action has a single isolated motive. "For example, some one commits suicide. 'Bad

business!' says the citizen; 'Sickness,' the sick man; 'Disappointed hopes,' the bankrupt." The real reason may be a combination of these motives or it may be none of these. Strindberg says, "My souls are combinations of past and present stages of culture, shreds of books and journals, fragments of men and women, pieces of Sunday attire, that are now rags." And again he says, "The person who has achieved a fixed temperament or adapted himself to a certain rôle in life, who in a word had ceased to grow, was supposed to have character; whilst one who developed, the skilful navigator on the stream of life, who does not sail with close tied sails, but who knows when to tack before the wind, was deemed deficient in character. . . . I do not believe in simple character in the theater."

*Toward an
open tech-
nique in the
theater*

Manifestly these ideas are far from naturalistic in any sense employed by other playwrights. Perhaps one would better call them "super-naturalistic." They contain the dynamite which was to blow the enclosed form of dramatic composition to pieces. Strindberg's later experiments in the drama are so compounded of technique and psychology that it is difficult to say at what point the psychology begins and the technique ends. It is certain that Strindberg was reaching toward, and in some respects anticipating, that new "psycho-analysis" that was to change the methods of psychology and the formulas of character. Once it is granted that life is not lived on one plane, but is lived on many planes of consciousness, and the fundamentals of drama from the beginning of its history are changed. First of all there disappears all possibility of

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setting a limit to the action. It is of the nature of the action that it has no limits. From this it follows that plot in the sense of a hard web of intrigue must disappear. The idea of variety in identity of personality has already been suggested. This idea had wide consequences in drama. It immensely complicated human relationships. At the same time it enhanced their fruitfulness and perplexing interest. At a stroke it did away with two conventions which had always been of great effect in binding the action. One of these concerned "the stage" of the action, whether in the mind of the actors or in the neutral ground between actors; and the second was the unifying conception of Fate or all-potent powers. Not only was there no longer a single stage of action. There was not even a single universe or a single enveloping idea.

*The idea of
expression-
ism*

All this pointed the way toward a new conception of the drama. The term "expressionism" was not employed until after Strindberg's death, but there is no question that he was the originator of the form. As against the old presentative and enclosed form of drama which by main force crystallized the action into a hard and unyielding substance of art, there now came a new and suggestive form which was by nature like an agglomeration of radio-active atoms. Such a drama is not a closely knit fabric (at its best but a reflection of the limitations of the author's mind), but a handful of missiles thrown in every direction into the void. Of such "open" forms of dramaturgy Strindberg made the first drafts. No messages were nicely delivered in a package. There is not even a consistent symbolism. The part of the playwright is but functional. He em-

plays the play as an expression of a thousand tangled motives on many planes of reality and dream. Certainly it is not his business to warp his material into a consistent pattern. The play can be of any length from a fragment to a trilogy. It may be processional in action or simply an aggregation of scenes. It may deal with many aspects, phases, planes of the same action. Strindberg justifies some of these by calling them dream plays. But it would be false to his conception of the world to suppose that he interprets the term "dream" narrowly. These dreams are not the dreams of sleep. They are the waking dreams of life released from the bonds of simplifying thought and revealed in all their tangled richness and ridiculous profusion. In *Toward Damascus*, I and II, 1898, Strindberg starts the drama of the new century on a new path. This is followed in 1901 by *The Dance of Death*, Parts 1 and 2, in 1902 by *The Dream Play*, in 1904 by the third part of *Toward Damascus*, and in 1907 by *The Spook Sonata*. Of this form Strindberg says in his Preface to *The Dream Play* that in it anything may happen in that time and space have passed away, leaving only a *mélange* of memories, fancies, and extravagances. The form is hampered by no law because it is derived from but one consciousness, that of the Dreamer who knows no secrets, or congruities, or laws.

*Strindberg
and the
twentieth-
century
theater*

The influence of Strindberg moved slowly in the theater. His effectiveness as a playwright and as a force in ideas was held back by his apparent unbalance and by that peculiar intensity of method that carried him beyond the sympathies of any but the strongest

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mind of his audience. In this he was unlike Ibsen and at a disadvantage beside Ibsen. Ibsen the waybreaker and destroyer of values was at the same time a constructive prophet. He had a definite evangel for fundamental thinkers. And by an easy misreading of him the sentimentalists all over the world could find contentment in him. But one could not misread Strindberg, nor find content, nor discover a constructive message. Strindberg was a nihilist who showed a world which had been held together by ideas, ideals, illusions, and romanticisms, now scattering centrifugally apart. And he carried this centrifugal tendency into the form of his plays. Naturally one does not create disciples for such a view as this. And Strindberg's position was not helped by his forays against ascendant womanhood. And yet the very pressure under which the plays of Strindberg moved increased their ultimate power. Unlike Ibsen he did not depend upon ideas for his influence but upon the vital and concrete symbols of an art that was coming to represent the temper of the times. Here he had an advantage. For some of Strindberg's symbols are of a beauty and majesty seldom seen in the theater. He was a supreme artificer working by the strength of his own muscles out in a no-man's-land. It is characteristic that he should for long have been compelled to work alone and that he should have died alone. While Ibsen died the petted darling of an admiring world, Strindberg's disciples are even to-day but a handful. But wherever genius appears, whether in Germany, Italy, Spain, or America, it pays tribute to Strindberg.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Strindberg and Shaw — The Critic and the Playwright — Shaw not an Innovator in Dramatic Form — Persistence of Comedy — Shaw's Stock of Ideas — Plays on Contemporary Ideas — Discussion Plays — Comedies of History — Post-War Plays — Shaw and the Spirit of his Time

Strindberg and Shaw As an antidote for Strindberg nothing could be better than to turn to Shaw. There are few themes in the repertory of Strindberg that Shaw has not touched. Like Strindberg, Shaw is a man of individual and commanding genius. But the methods of the two men differ fundamentally. Strindberg's plays are made out of his tortured reactions to the life of his time. Of general ideas he had few or none. Shaw, on the other hand, had a body of perfectly cogent ideas quite apart from his playwriting. But he never opens a shutter on the torture or passion of his own soul.

Critics and playwrights As a thinker employing the machinery of drama for the expression of ideas Shaw is immensely the more important. He started life as a critic of music, literature, and plays; a large part of his energy has always been expended in criticism of the social, political, economic, and moral ideas and practices of his time; even when he employs the dramatic form he never ceases to be a critic. As a playwright, on the other hand, employing the drama to broaden knowledge of the world, Strindberg is the more important. And he has done far more to enrich the resources of dramatic art.

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As a technical playwright Shaw has been as reactionary as he has been liberal in ideas and criticism. Strindberg was always interested in drama as adventure, as a personal exploit in the technique of living. It is therefore toward the drama of the future that he faces. Shaw is interested in the drama as vehicle. He therefore turns to the well-perfected art which has been worked out in centuries of the old theater.

*Not an
innovator
in form*

Shaw's novelties have been so much emphasized that it seems important to state that he has been in no sense an innovator in the art of the theater as such. Apart from an experiment or two in the unities, and his "metabiological pentateuch," *Back to Methuselah*, he has made no effort to dally with the conventions of the stage. He is so interested in reaching the minds of men that he has no time to reconstruct their art. Of all the playwrights studied in this book Shaw connects himself most closely with the classical traditions of the long history of the stage. He himself speaks of his work as "a series of comedies of manners in the classic fashion." And again he says, "I have always cast my plays in the ordinary practical comedy form in use in all the theaters." He accepts without correction the title his French biographer, Hamon, applies to him of "the modern Molière." In characterization he admittedly stands with the day before yesterday of Dickens, rather than with the to-day of Hauptmann; employing caricature, gag lines, humorous monologues, and comedy butts. Shaw has been no idolator of the play as play. On more than one occasion he has been willing to tailor a play for an actor, to write down to the

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public, to burlesque his own and other men's serious efforts. His revolt against the florid construction of the romantic play has blinded critics to the real aridity of his plot invention.

Persistence of comedy

We have seen how during a hundred years classical tragedy had disappeared. Save for a few lusty examples the romantic play had either been pushed to the closet shelf or debased into melodrama. Where formerly the drama of literary tradition had ruled, a new drama had taken charge of the popular stage, a drama intent on service and concerned with social issues. The more imaginative artists like Hauptmann and Maeterlinck, Strindberg and Wedekind were pushing forward toward types of dramatic art that had never been practiced before. Of all the forms of drama that go back to classical times the only one that carries on the ancient tradition is comedy. Comedy is immortal. As long as there are judgments to render, excesses to correct, falsehoods to castigate comedy will remain. In the practice of comedy Shaw associates himself with the theater of all ages.

Reasons for the long life of comedy

The form and nature of comedy supply the reasons for its long life. Strictly speaking comedy at its highest is not concerned directly with character and events. It is concerned with a judgment on character and events. If it uses all its craft to present these fairly and forcefully it is for a purpose other than that of depiction. It is for the purpose of subjecting character and events to measure. However much the external conditions of life may change,

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the standards of judgment can change but little from age to age. So it is that Aristophanes and Plautus, Molière, Goldoni, and Holberg are of one family. It is one of the glories of the British stage that while Britain introduced the romantic tragedy to Europe and with it an era of dramatic confusion, in matters of comedy England has held high the standards of classic order. Since the death of Shakespeare the greatest writers for the British stage have been writers of comedy. Ben Jonson, Congreve, Wycherley, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Wilde, and Shaw were all of a line. By a strange chance most of them were Irishmen. This fact encourages interesting and unsafe generalization. But there is nothing unsafe in calling attention to the fact that of the British playwrights that immediately preceded Shaw the two who possessed the most genius had gifts which pointed directly to his own. Both W. S. Gilbert and Oscar Wilde have been considered under other heads. Both appeared at the end of the Victorian era, an era of rigorous standards as to conduct and appearances. Both were interested in the measure of minds and were adepts at paradox, that form of comedy by which truth is illuminated through the shock of surprise. Like Shaw both employed their art to test convention and to shock morality. They drew their audiences by wit and held them by ideas.

*Shaw's
stock of
ideas*

In the case of a dramatist like Strindberg who gets his plays from his own life it is appropriate to ask, "How deeply did he live?" Not so with Shaw. Of him who gets his plays directly from thinking we ask not how he has lived, but what he has thought, what stock of ideas he brings to the

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playwright's desk. The facts of Shaw's life are then of comparatively little importance. He was born in Ireland but lived most of his life in London. He had his impecunious younger years. A proponent of improved economic and social systems he has been careful to prosper under the conditions that are. A mental dabbler in many enterprises he had been careful to make himself responsible for none. It is not from the story of such a life that one gets a measure by which to value the plays that are its fruit. These can be judged by one standard alone, and that is by an inventory of the ideas that the author brings to the theatrical market.

His learning On the side of mental equipment Shaw brings to the craft of the theater one of the first intellects of the modern world. He is the one dramatist since Goethe whose ideas are valuable of themselves apart from the form in which they are expressed. Before he began to write plays he had indoctrinated himself in Fabian Socialism, the most scholarly and only historically minded school of social reform. Of his economic studies he admits that they have played as important a part in his playwriting as the knowledge of anatomy did in the work of Michael Angelo. Shaw did more than educate himself in sociology and economics. He became a learned critic of music, literature, and art. His reading in all fields, modern and ancient, is prodigious. One has but to read his Prefaces to see how thoroughly he has equipped his mind in ancient philosophy and modern science. And it is not mere equipment. He handles his learning with grace and agility. He has called himself a crow who has followed many plows, and hopped, hungry

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and curious across many fields of politics, philosophy, and art. The themes he confesses to are an index to the variety of his ideas, including slum-landlordism, "doctrinaire free love (pseudo-Ibsenism) prostitution, militarism, marriage, history, current politics, natural Christianity, national and individual character, paradoxes of conventional society, husband hunting, questions of conscience, professional delusions and impostures." And in addition to these he discusses in his Prefaces Puritan morals, Shakespeare, colonization, English and American dialects, phonetics, censorship, motherhood, Joan of Arc, the Irish, prize-fighting, the Life Force, evolutionary science, the new religion, the future of mankind.

Shaw's plays Such is the equipment by which Shaw's play-writing is to be judged. The plays themselves Shaw has called by many kinds of names — anti-romantic comedy, topical comedy, a comedy and a philosophy, a trifle, a mystery, a melodrama, an adventure, a history, a tragedy, a discussion, a conversation, a debate. Of his plays certain ones are so short or so frivolous that they need not detain us: *The Man of Destiny*, 1897, *The Admirable Bashville*, 1901, *How He Lied to her Husband*, 1904, *The Interlude at the Playhouse*, 1907, *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, 1910, *Overruled*, 1912, *Great Catherine*, 1913, *The Music Cure*, 1914, *Augustus does his Bit*, 1917, *The Inca of Perusalem*, 1917, *O'Flaherty, V.C.*, 1918, *Annajanska, the Bolshevik Empress*, 1918.

Plays on contemporary ideas In all of Shaw's plays it is the author's purpose to test the nature of ideas by clear sight and ridicule. There are in effect two sources

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of these ideas. Some are contemporary and are implicit in the formulas of the life of the present. Others are the ideas of history, and constitute, either truly or falsely, the legend that our times worship as representing the past. Shaw began with a series of plays pillorying contemporary manners and morals. In his first play, *Widowers' Houses*, 1892, and in the two later plays, *The Philanderer*, 1898, and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, 1898, there is more than a trace of that biting censure of contemporary morality that marks Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*. But Shaw is too much a believer in ideas to be an accusatory playwright. Immediately after his first play he turned aside from serious intent to make a more playful analysis of the romance of war in *Arms and the Man*, 1894, followed in 1897 by a no less antic study of a similar theme in *The Devil's Disciple*, a melodrama that undermines the melodramatic method. Meanwhile he had given the weary triangle play its *coup de grâce* in one of the most exquisite plays of modern times, *Candida*, 1895. *You Never Can Tell*, 1899, and *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, 1900, are light comedies written with the public in view. In *Man and Superman*, 1903, Shaw turned to a theme that marks the pinnacle of his wisdom. There are in this play two planes of action. On both the author has a corrective service to render. The first plane deals with an understanding of the true relations of modern men and women and punctures the romantic conventions of courtship by showing, as had been shown frequently in comedy (Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Wild Goose Chase*, for instance), the man the pursued, the woman the pursuer. But this anti-romantic plane only represents the surface of Shaw's action. He is more interested in revealing the springs underlying his plot than

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he is in playing with its details. In the *Life Force* he finds the governing principle of human life. Here we have Strindberg's favorite theme treated with humorous understanding. Shaw is aware that evolutionary process is at work through individuals. He is determined that while men are but atoms in this process, they themselves have, each in the cell of his atom, a consciously directive force. They have will, prevision. Life is not a chapter of accidents, of circumstantial selection. At its heart there is selection by forethought, and each individual builds the greater life. Shaw returns to this idea and completes it in *Back to Methuselah*, 1921.

Discussion plays Of the following plays it may be said that they are in one way or another discussion plays. That is they are plays in which the normal relationships of men and women are twisted about in order to give opportunity for brilliant and revealing discussions upon many topics. In these plays of provocative speech we have *John Bull's Other Island*, 1904, *Major Barbara*, 1905, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, 1906, *Getting Married*, 1908, *Misalliance*, 1910, *Fanny's First Play*, 1911, *Pygmalion*, 1913.

Comedies of history As a student of contemporary affairs Shaw finds that nothing is of greater force on the minds of men than the sanctified ideas of the past. These ideas are much harder to attack than present prejudice. They are in fact prejudices of a privileged type. But they are no less likely to be wrong. In an important group of his plays Shaw attacks the historical and legendary conceptions that have been rendered sacred by long acceptance. Some of these ideas are identified with

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important figures of the past, such as Cæsar, Napoleon, Shakespeare. Some of them relate to mass movements in history, like early Christianity and the social revolutions. In either case Shaw subjects them to an irreverent and searching scrutiny. He does this not so much to demolish honored figures of the past as to revitalize them by basing them upon understanding rather than upon cant. Shaw begins this style of play with his short *The Man of Destiny*, 1897, dealing with Napoleon. Here the romantic conception of the strong man is riddled. The process is continued in *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, 1899. In destroying the legendary Cæsar Shaw succeeded in leaving an even more heroic and sinewy hero. The writing of *Cæsar and Cleopatra* involved Shaw in relationship with another sacred legend, that of Shakespeare. To the dissipation of this idolatry, and the substitution of a saner understanding, Shaw set himself in public pronouncements and in his Prefaces. The purpose is of course clear. Shakespeare needs to be protected by no false illusions of greatness. Shaw returned to the treatment of historical conceptions in *Androcles and the Lion*, 1913; one of the greatest works in this order is *Saint Joan*, 1923.

Post-war plays

It is noteworthy of Shaw's vitality that the three plays written since the Great War and during the author's seventh decade of life show greater energy than anything written since *Man and Superman* in 1903. Shaw had been shaken by the war out of his clowning. He now comes more than ever to trust a sympathetic insight, to depend upon wisdom rather than wit. And also he is wise enough now and then to accept and admit an influence. In *Heartbreak House*, 1919, there is

more than a trace of Chekhov; certainly *Back to Methuselah*, 1921, owes something to Strindberg's extended dramatic forms.

Shaw as a playwright As has been said, Shaw is a comedian. This means, by and large, that he handles the same materials in comedy that the dramatists of ideas handle seriously. There are of course important differences in the attitude toward ideas of the two orders of playwrights. In the plays of Dumas ideas were the explicit by-products of the action. In Ibsen ideas were implicit in the action. In Shaw ideas provide the action. This fact is immediately important with respect to Shaw's characterization. Shaw's characters are either thinking men, idea controlled, who are swayed and energized by their ideas; or they are not characters at all, but simply automata for the spouting of Shaw's own precious paradoxes. It must be admitted that a large number of Shaw's characters are of this latter type. Let one who wishes to inquire how much of Shaw's play is drama, how much idea, ask himself what would be left when the explicit ideas were extracted. Parts of *Candida*, *Man and Superman*, a scene or so from *The Doctor's Dilemma*, several scenes from *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, *Heartbreak House*, and *Saint Joan* contain drama in a sense easily recognizable in all times. As for the rest the vitality of the play rests upon the vitality of the ideas, or the irrepressible spirit of the author's talkativeness.

Nature of his characters

The lack of clear characterization in Shaw is significant. For while the drama is made up of other factors as well as characterization

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this factor is well-nigh indispensable. It must be admitted that to the extent that character is necessary in plays Shaw's plays lack drama. For there are no impacts of wills; there is no interweaving of the subtle complexities of motive. Shaw's characters suffer terribly by their overarticulateness. Not to speak frivolously of the sufferings they cause each other in forcing each other to listen, they fail to attain to mental maturity simply because they have not those silences, hesitations, and revealing inversions and reticences which are the first symbols of character in speech. In one respect Shaw's characters are true to the time in which he writes. For they represent the coming of age of the mob mind, when it is garrulous, very much conscious of new forces, when it is disposed to take its own powers and thoughts very seriously. Of all the major characters that Shaw created only two stand out, Cæsar, who is a masterpiece of quite scholarly construction, and Marchbanks, who is a masterpiece of intuitive understanding. The great and successful men, Napoleon, Tanner, Richard, Blanco, Bluntschli, are much of a pattern, and a hollow pattern too.

The secret of his power Is there then no drama in the works of Shaw? The answer is most decidedly that there is. It is not a drama that inheres in character, or deep-lying motive subtly revealed, the threading and interlacing of strands, the clash of purposes and motives. It is rather the deep and intangible drama that lurks far behind these things. He is a poor reader of print who does not know that Shaw is one of the most serious writing men of the modern world. This seriousness is revealed in everything he writes. But it is not a seriousness that is highly con-

cerned with immediate reforms. Shaw is interested in the flow of great forces. He has the cosmical view. In his treatment of these forces he has both sunniness and ease. He does not display emotion on the surface, but deep springs of emotion exist in *Candida*, *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, *Man and Superman*, *Heartbreak House*, and *Saint Joan*. Strange to say there is very little irony in Shaw, though there is much raillery. The depths that there are in these plays exist far behind the characters and the events in a regard for humanity as a whole rather than for individual men and in the spirit of genuine religion that the author infuses into his work.

Shaw and his time In the case of a man like Shaw his own evaluation of himself is likely to be a fair one. "I deal with all periods, but I never study any period but the present, which I have not yet mastered and never shall; and as a dramatist I have no clue to any historical or other personage save that part of him which is also myself." Shaw has been called an anti-romantic. This is not the case. He is only against that form of romance that confuses literature and life, ideals and practice. The list of those he admires and in some respects follows includes both romanticists and anti-romanticists. Bunyan and Blake, Hogarth, Turner, Goethe, Shelley, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Nietzsche, Ibsen, Samuel Butler, and William Morris cannot be said to follow any one pattern but they are all sympathetic to Shaw.

Summary In one of Shaw's recent Prefaces he says, "From Molière to Oscar Wilde we had a line of comedic playwrights who, if they had nothing fun-

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damentally positive to say, were at least in revolt against falsehood, and were not only, as they claimed," chastening morals by ridicule, "but, in Jonson's phrase, clearing our minds of cant, and thereby showing an uneasiness in the presence of error which is the surest symptom of intellectual vitality." In this passage may be found the words by which Shaw's achievements may be indicated: He has been "in revolt against falsehood and imposture," has "chastened morals by ridicule," has "cleared out minds of cant," has "showed an uneasiness in the presence of error." To these qualities there has been added another. He has "had something positive to say."

Shaw's vogue developed slowly. His greatest successes have been gained in published plays and in isolated productions. In England after the first production at the Independent Theater he had sporadic productions by Richard Mansfield, Ellen Terry, and Forbes-Robertson. In 1898 Janet Achurch produced *Candida* in the English Provinces. His greatest success was won at the Court Theater, 1904-07, and the Savoy, 1908, during which seasons Vedrenne and Barker gave 701 performances of eleven of his plays. In 1903 Arnold Daly produced *Candida* in New York. American interest in Shaw has always been marked. Shaw's German translator has been Siegfried Trebitsch, his French translators, A. and H. Hamon, his Spanish, Julio Broutá, his Italian, A. Agresti.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE NEW ROMANCE

Limits of the Naturalistic Form — Persistence of the Romantic Play — Edmond Rostand — His Influences and Qualities — Other French Romancers — Gabriele d'Annunzio — Other Italian Romancers — Hugo von Hofmannsthal — Other German Romancers — Stephen Phillips

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, Second Series:

Cyrano de Bergerac, by Edmond Rostand; translated by Gertrude Hall.

La Gioconda, by Gabriele d'Annunzio; translated by Arthur Symons.

In Contemporary Plays:

Paola and Francesca, by Stephen Phillips.

*Limits of
the natural-
istic form*

WE have followed the development of contemporary drama from its beginnings in the popular play, and in the revolting romantic dramatists, through the rise of the well-made play and its offshoot, the problem play, to the highest achievements of the naturalistic dramatists. The naturalistic drama provided the characteristic formula of the drama of transition but it never supplied an exact pattern for plays as the well-made play of France had done. For this reason it is difficult to say just what a naturalistic play is and is not. Employing the term strictly it seems safe to say that very few plays written during the modern dramatic revival have been strictly naturalistic. The naturalistic form as employed by Gorky, by Hauptmann, by Galsworthy, and by Chekhov has, in the hands of other playwrights, taken on qualities of manipulation from the well-made play, of intent from the problem play and of sentiment from the romantic play. The very aridity of

the naturalistic form has been a damper on the imagination of playwrights. As a result there arose the conviction, not based on fact, that there is an essential quarrel between naturalism and the imagination. Playwrights of the more lusty imagination, like Strindberg, Wedekind, and the Expressionists, called for the pushing on of dramatic technique beyond the limits of naturalism. Those of a more conventional stamp fell back upon the persistent practice of romanticism.

Persistence of the romantic Through all the events outlined above the ideal of the romantic play had never entirely been extinguished. For varying periods it had been pushed to one side, by the more popular forms of playwriting, by melodramas, thesis and problem plays, and later by naturalism. But in the minds of many these were considered vulgar intruders upon the art of the stage. Many still looked hopefully for a revival of the literary tradition of romanticism. And playwrights were to be found in every country who turned their pens to the writing of plays which finally rested only in the bookshelves. In the last half of the nineteenth century the poetic play had been represented in England by Alfred Tennyson, W. G. Wills, A. C. Swinburne, and John Davidson, in addition to a host of others now forgotten; in Germany, by Adolf Wilbrandt, Ernst von Wildenbruch, Paul Heyse, Ernst von Wolzogen; in France, by Henri de Bornier, Théodore de Banville, François Coppée, Prosper Mérimée, Octave Feuillet, Paul Déroulède, Catulle Mendès, Jean Richepin; in America, by George H. Boker, T. B. Aldrich, H. W. Longfellow.

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*Heralds of
the romantic
revival*

Now and then voices were raised indicating that the romantic revival was at hand.

Such was the "manifesto of repudiation" from a group of Zola's erstwhile followers; such was the effect of the inquiry of the Paris journalist, Jules Huret, in 1891, which led to the conclusion supported by sixty-four of the leading writers of the day that "naturalism was dead." Such was the pronunciamiento of Yeats, "The scientific movement is ebbing a little everywhere . . . and I am certain that everywhere literature will return once more to its old extravagant, phantastical expression, for in literature, unlike science, there are no discoveries, and it is always the old that returns." Each country saw the coming of a romantic swallow, but in no case did the summer of romanticism arrive.

EDMOND ROSTAND AND THE NEW FRENCH ROMANCE

*Career of
Rostand*

The outstanding romantic of the modern theater is Edmond Rostand, born in 1868. Both in his life and work Rostand was distinguished by elegance and an aristocratic tradition. The son of a renowned economist who had translated Catullus, Rostand married Rosemonde Gérard, the granddaughter of a maréchal who had served with Napoleon at Wagram. Success crowned his writing while he was little more than a child. In his early thirties, when his fame was secure, he built himself an estate in the Pyrenees far from the factions of the world and the theater. There he lived until his death in 1918, an observer of a world in which he took no part. Rostand's public life was altogether identified with the plays that he gave to France and with an occasional address in verse.

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*Rostand
and the
theater*

Throughout his life Rostand had no contacts whatsoever with the naturalistic world of the theater. He approached playwriting rather

through the diversions of the amateur than through experiments on the boards of the popular stage. Like Gautier and Coppée, he received the earliest influences on his verse from Spain. The critic of the *Revue Bleue*, M. Filon, welcomed Rostand's first volume of verse, *Les Musardises* as the most brilliant poetic début since that of Alfred de Musset with *Contes d'Espange*. Rostand's first play was a musical comedy, *Le Gant rouge*, written in 1888. At twenty-one he wrote his *Les deux Pierrots* which was first played in an amateur production by himself, his young wife, and another. Submitted to the Comédie Française the play was refused, but elicited from Claretie a request to be shown the author's next work. A month later the following play was written and submitted; it was in due time accepted. *Les Romanesques* was dedicated to Rostand's young wife, who, like Sylvette, had but recently left the convent. After some delay in favor of a piece by M. de Curel *Les Romanesques* was acted in 1894 with happy results. The play was crowned by the Académie Française. One year later, in April, 1895, *La Princesse Lointaine* was played at the Renaissance Theatre by Madame Sarah Bernhardt. This play, dealing with the well-known story of Mélissinde, Princess of Tripoli, and the troubadour Joffroy Rudel, is obvious enough in theme, but graceful in execution. It was ill received by the press, but accepted by the public. *La Samaritaine*, presented in Holy Week, 1896, again with Bernhardt, was well received but was withdrawn after eight days. Finally in late December,

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1897, at the Théâtre Porte-Saint-Martin, with Coquelin *ainé* in the title rôle, came *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The sensation created by the first performance of this play has been compared, in the history of the French theater, with the reception accorded to *Hernani* three quarters of a century before. In 1900, *L'Aiglon*, a play on the life of the young duc de Reichstadt, was presented with Bernhardt in the leading rôle of a young man. Rostand waited nine years before bringing another play to the stage. *Chantecler* had been practically finished in 1905. Rostand withheld it year after year, rewriting, perfecting, introducing jewels of wit and preciousity. Meanwhile Coquelin, who had rehearsed the leading rôle, had died, and for the eventual production Rostand turned again to Madame Bernhardt. This was the last play issued by the poet during his lifetime. A play on Faust was announced for 1911, and *Le dernière nuit de Don Juan*, was issued posthumously in 1921.

*Qualities of
Rostand's
work*

In the case of a writer of naturalism or of comedy it is appropriate to ask, "How independent is he?" In the case of a writer of romance, on the other hand, we must ask, "What are his traditions?" As a romanticist and a Frenchman, Rostand had the richest store of romantic material of Europe to draw from. His significance arises as much from his avoidances as from the influences he accepted. Naturally the first obligation of any modern French romanticist is to Victor Hugo. Rostand accepted Hugo's precepts and bettered his instruction. In the Preface to *Cromwell*, Hugo had expounded some standards he had not himself been able to reach in his work. He had called for flesh-

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and-blood characters, founded in the paradox and inconsistency of life rather than tailor-made characters founded in the factitious and the abstract. He had demanded the persistent illusion of life, precision of details, and local color. Above all he had condemned the sway of good verse, saying, "It is good verse that kills good plays." But Hugo had not followed his own rules. His plays had been based upon abstractions. He had buried the action in rhetoric. It remained for Rostand to put Hugo's rules to use. His greatest play, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, is in every sense a theater piece. It is instinct with life, action, movement. He employs the contrasts of the grotesque and the beautiful. From Sardou he had learned the lesson of crispness and sensational shock. While amplifying beautiful language, he is careful to distinguish between lyric and dramatic poetry. While lacking the deeper gifts of characterization, he is able to multiply characters in a crowd by employing crisp distinguishing traits.

Further influences But Rostand goes back beyond Hugo for his influence. His romanticism is that of the *preciosité* of the age of Louis XIII and not that of the democratic 1830. In his work there is a marked influence from Corneille; there are influences less marked from Racine and Molière, from Marivaux and the Italian comedy. And he comes down to modern times for strains from Banville, from Coppée and from Musset. A significant influence comes from Shakespeare; from *Romeo and Juliet* in *Les Romanesques* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*, from *Hamlet* and the Falstaff plays in *L'Aiglon*, and in *Chantecler* echoes of *Macbeth* and of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As has been said, Rostand does not command

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strong characters. The Don César type appears frequently, in Straforel, in Joffroy, in Cyrano, in Flambeau, and in Chantecler. Sylvette and Straforel in *Les Romanesques* are sketches of Roxane and Cyrano. Rostand is limited in his powers of drawing feminine types; his women are superficial, seductive, eternally feminine. But if Rostand does not seize the character of the individual, he makes up for this by his power of drawing individuals in groups. In his masses of people he has vitality, precision, constant change. His plots are either derived and conventional or they are second-rate. And he seldom or ever sinks the drama beneath the words. What then is the secret of Rostand's fame? It lies in the fact that he is essentially a French dramatist with Gallic wit and with the command of style that only the French can display and appreciate. *Cyrano de Bergerac* is the most lusty piece of sheer theatricalism of our times and one of the most lusty of the French theater.

*Deepening
of his note*

At the end of Rostand's life there is a deepening and a saddening of his genius. Unfortunately this is not accompanied by a maintenance of his theatric power. As the more adventitious appeals of the theater sink in his esteem he rises in value as a poet and tribune of his age. In *Chantecler* there are indeed the precious notes of his earlier style. There is also a subjectivity and universality that are lacking in his previous work. More than ever elsewhere in his work the artist Rostand in this play speaks to his times.

On its more literary margin French drama had never failed of a supply of poetic dramas. As the century drew to a close there was a classic revival led by Leconte de

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Lisle, Anatole France, Alfred Poizat, André Suarès, Alexandre Parodi, Jules Bois, Albert Samain, Alfred Mortier.

The romantic drama was represented by Miguel Zamacoïs, André Rivoire, François Porché, Emile Bergerat, Jean Richepin, André Gide, Henri Ghéon, Maurice Magre, and many others.

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO AND ITALIAN ROMANCE

*A playwright of
florid imagination*

The only romanticist of the modern European stage who will stand beside Rostand is Gabriele d'Annunzio. And he is more poet than playwright. D'Annunzio impressed himself upon his age by the extraordinary fervor of his imagination. As playwright he hardly had a conception of the deeper creativeness represented by Hauptmann and Strindberg. Next to a florid imagination and a rare verbal genius the quality that most distinguishes d'Annunzio's work is scholarship. In richness of historical and legendary resource few if any playwrights of our time can compare with d'Annunzio. His plays are compounded of rare stores of learning drawn from archæology, the fine arts, rare sciences, and the lore of eroticism and abnormal psychology.

D'Annunzio's suggestibility

In addition to these qualities there is another strain in d'Annunzio's work that marks him as something less than a first-rate artist. This is a strain of suggestibility, almost of imitativeness in his writing. The poet who had by far the greatest influence over d'Annunzio is Maeterlinck. In the half a dozen or more plays that have a Maeterlinckian flavor d'Annunzio is at his best. When, however, he surrenders to the in-

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fluence of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Nietzsche the result is not so fortunate. Never a master of the theater he writes plays as a novelist and poet who had come under the various influences of Sardou, Maeterlinck, and the Pre-Raphaelites.

*Sketch of
his life*

Gabriele d'Annunzio was born in 1864 on a yacht on the Adriatic. He attended school in Tuscany and then went to Rome where he joined the more advanced literary groups and filled his life with the experiences that were later to be translated into his writings. He first began to write *saynètes* on New Testament themes, adapting various parables to dramatic form. Upon falling under the influence of Maeterlinck he proceeded to write a series of plays reminiscent of the flavor of the Belgian, but without the purity of conception of his work. In this manner he wrote various dream plays on the subject of the four Seasons. Maeterlinckian too was the attempt in *La città morta* (*The Dead City*), 1898, to modernize the tone of Greek drama. *La Gioconda*, 1898, is a modern play almost of the problem type written in a lyrical mood, and turning on a complex question of art. The style of this in phrasing, repetition and construction is modeled after Maeterlinck. *La Gloria* (*Glory*), 1899, is the most ambitious of his plays and signified a change taking place in the author toward a wider social interest. It is, however, a sadly confused and overstrained piece of work. In *Francesca da Rimini*, 1901, we have one of the great Italian tragedies. In *La figlia di Jorio* (*The Daughter of Jorio*), 1904, d'Annunzio writes a thriller under influences equally derived from Greek tragedy and Sardou. Of d'Annunzio's plays three, *The*

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Dead City, *La Gioconda*, and *Francesca da Rimini*, were beautifully translated by Arthur Symons.

Other plays of d'Annunzio are *La nave* (*The Ship*), 1908, *Fedra*, 1909, *Le martyre de Saint Sébastien*, 1911, *La Pisanella*, 1913, *La Chevrefeuille*, 1913.

Other romantic dramatists of the new theater of Italy are Sem Benelli (1877-), author of *La maschera di Bruto*, 1905, *La cena delle beffe* (*The Jest*), 1909, *L'amore dei tre re* (*The love of the three Kings*), 1910; Ercole Luigi Morselli (1882-1921), author of *Orione*, 1910, *La prigione* (*The Prism*), and *Glauco*; Nino Berrini, author of *Il Befardo*, 1919.

New poetic and symbolic dramatists of Spain are Francisco de Villaspesa (1877-); Eduardo Marquina (1879-); Antonia Rey Soto, Ramon Goy de Silva, and Jacinto Gran Delgado.

HOFMANNSTHAL AND THE NEW ROMANTIC DRAMA OF GERMANY

*The roman-
tic play in
Germany*

When we come to Germany, we find the romantic play taking a place more near the center of the stage than in France and Italy.

In these latter countries romance had been all but overcome by melodrama. In Germany, on the other hand, some strains of literary romanticism still persisted. In the last decade of the century there had been a revival of poetic and imaginative plays in Hauptmann's *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* and *Die Versunkene Glocke*, Fulda's *Der Talisman*, 1893, Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel*, 1893, Sudermann's *Die Drei Reiherfedern* and *Strandkinder*, Ernst von Wildenbruch's *Die Lieder des Euripides* and *Der Deutsche König*, Schnitzler's *Paracelsus* and *Der Schleier der Beatrice*.

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*Quality of
Hofmanns-
thal's plays*

In Hugo von Hofmannsthal (born 1874 in Vienna) there was a double revolt alike against the trammels of naturalism on the one side and of romanticism on the other. He set his model in Sophocles. It was his wish to apply the primitive method to the old legends, to delve deeply behind the Greek dramatists to the human sources of their myth. Particularly to be noted in Hofmannsthal is the stripping away of all reason and concept so that what remains can be expressed in pure music, pure color, pure emotion. Like Maeterlinck, Hofmannsthal is the darling of the newer art producers of the stage. While Hofmannsthal has been ranked with the classicists, by no stretch of the imagination can his classicism be considered other than theater classicism. He employs the old stories imaginatively and colorfully, but he makes no attempt to reflect the deeper motives of the original or even to apply a revealing modern psychology. The new world of sensation is strong upon him, in color, dance, and music. So it is rather from Bagdad than from Athens that his eastern influence comes. From the west there are influences from Elizabethan England and from Spain. And it is significant that Hofmannsthal turns at will from the Greeks to Otway and to the lightest of Viennese comedy.

Hofmannsthal's chief plays: *Der Tor und der Tod*, 1893, *Die kleine Welttheater*, 1897, *Die Frau im Fenster*, 1899, *Der Tod des Tizian*, 1901, *Die Hochzeit der Sobeïde*, 1902, *Der Abenteurer und die Sängerin*, 1902, *Elektra*, 1904, *Ödipus und die Sphinx*, 1906, *Christina's Heimreise*, 1910, *Der Schwierige*, 1922. Among translations are *Das gerettete Venedig*, 1905, from Otway, and *König Ödipus*, 1910, from Sophocles. Librettos for operas are *Der Rosenkava-*

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lier, 1911, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, 1913, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, 1919.

Other writers of poetic and romantic plays in German include Herbert Eulenberg (1876-), Gustav Voellmoeller (1875-), Paul Ernst (1866-), Richard Beer-Hofmann (1866-), Detlev von Lilienkron (1844-1909), Richard Dehmel (1863-1920). As author of highly romantic "people's plays" the Austrian Karl Schönherr (1869-) deserves to be mentioned.

THE ROMANTIC DRAMA IN ENGLISH

*Stephen
Phillips
1868-1915*

In England during the first decade of the new century there was a brief revival of poetic drama in the theater in the work of Stephen

Phillips. Encouraged by George Alexander, Phillips wrote *Paola and Francesca*, published in 1900; in the same year Beerbohm Tree produced the poet's *Herod*, which was followed in 1901 by Alexander's production of the first play. Phillips was remarkable for a high command of stage technique, for fluent and beautiful verse, and for strong tragic sense.

Phillips's chief plays: *Paola and Francesca*, 1900, *Herod*, 1906, *Ulysses*, 1902, *The Sin of David*, published 1904, *Nero*, 1906.

Other poetic dramatists of England are James Elroy Flecker (1884-1915), author of *Hassan*; Robert Bridges, Lawrence Binyon, W. W. Gibson, Comyns Carr, Rudolf Besier, Laurence Housman, John Masefield, Israel Zangwill, Lascelles Abercrombie, Gordon Bottomley. *The Dynasts* by Thomas Hardy is cast in dramatic form, but is manifestly not written for production.

Among American writers of poetic plays are Percy MacKaye, Ridgeley Torrence, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Josephine Preston Peabody. *The Piper*, by the latter,

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won the Shakespeare prize for production at the Shakespeare Memorial Theater at Stratford-on-Avon in 1910.

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BOOK THREE
TWENTIETH-CENTURY DRAMA

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Local Movements in the Theater — The Irish National Theater — Irish Playwrights — J. M. Synge — Lady Gregory — Other Irish Playwrights — British Repertory and Provincial Theaters — John Galsworthy — Granville Barker — John Drinkwater — The New American Drama — Russian Drama — Anton Chekhov — Maxim Gorky

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, First Series:

Strife, by John Galsworthy.

The Madras House, by Granville Barker.

Riders to the Sea, by J. M. Synge.

The Rising of the Moon, by Lady Gregory.

The Hour Glass, by W. B. Yeats.

The Truth, by Clyde Fitch.

The Witching Hour, by Augustus Thomas.

The Great Divide, by William Vaughn Moody.

The Cherry Orchard, by Anton Chekhov; translated by George Calderon.

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, Second Series:

Milestones, by Arnold Bennett and Edward Knoblock.

Abraham Lincoln, by John Drinkwater.

The Lower Depths, by Maxim Gorky, translated by Edwin Hopkins.

Mixed Marriage, by St. John Ervine.

King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior, by Lord Dunsany.

In Contemporary Plays:

The Voysey Inheritance, by Granville Barker.

The Cassilis Engagement, by St. John Hankin.

Oliver Cromwell, by John Drinkwater.

Local movements in playwriting WE have seen that, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, the various movements in the theater culminated in a dramatic revival covering all parts of the civilized world. This revival was truly international in scope. It was dominated

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by movements of great sweep and potency which passed freely from country to country. Over the dramatic scene of the western world were certain major figures. Ibsen and Hauptmann, Maeterlinck and Strindberg were at their zenith. Shaw and Wedekind were in the ascendant. At this moment when the international theater seemed to be complete a counter movement set in. Here and there, in Ireland and Russia, in the provincial cities of England and in America, in Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia local movements began for the filling-in of the gaps in national drama.

*Significance
of local
movements*

These local movements are the direct result of that wave of enthusiasm for everything pertaining to the theater that has elsewhere been remarked. Naturally they had their social and political impulses as well. They implied a turning back of the minds of men from far wandering afield to the interests lying nearer home. They implied as well a belief that the drama as an art could be more universally distributed than it had been before. As a means to the wider usefulness of the theater many of these movements started not with plays, but, as they logically should, with the organizations upon which plays depend. In the new organizations which were created to serve local needs two features stand out:

- (1) The effort better to adjust the theater to the demands of society in both the cities and the provinces;
- (2) The effort to readjust the internal structure of the theater as a producing mechanism to the better purposes of art.

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATER

Literary sources of the Irish Theater

Among the new theaters which were created to serve a local need probably the most important in influence and attainments was the Irish National Theater. Ernest Boyd has

pointed out (in *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*) that the Irish dramatic movement really had two sources. The first was in a group of literary men who desired an outlet for their own work, and sought to do for Ireland what the Théâtre Libre and the London Independent Theatre had done elsewhere. This was a self-conscious movement engrafted on the existing theater. The Irish Literary Theater was established in 1899 by Edward Martyn, George Moore, and William Butler Yeats; to these there later were added Lady Gregory, A. E., and others. Some of these early proponents of an Irish theater were Ibsenites; Yeats was a poet; all represented the literary as distinguished from the folk or organization factors of the stage.

Roots in folk-life

The other source was of an entirely different stamp and, as it occurs, it was this that laid

the clearest mark on the Irish National Theater. This source was derived from the common life of the people which was at the moment seeking for a form of concrete expression. This folk uprising had no relationship either with the literary drama or with the organized theater. For types of production it went back to that spontaneous and playful spirit with which drama begins in the Middle Ages. In this movement W. G. and F. J. Fay were prime spirits. From the start there were popular, political, and even revolutionary elements in it. Eventually the two movements were joined, and the Irish National Theater

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was established with the support of writers, actors, and a certain number of those who had social or political purposes to serve. The real beginning of the Irish National Theater dates from 1904 when Miss A. E. F. Horniman provided the funds for the setting up of the Abbey Theater in Dublin.

Playwrights of the Irish Theater

This shifting of influence from the literary to the folk elements in the Irish National theater was highly important in setting the standards of composition that were to rule on its boards. The literary strains as represented by Yeats, A. E., George Moore, and Edward Martyn, were connected with the traditions of literature either through the social drama of Ibsen and the naturalists or through the French symbolists. Had the theater been limited to these it is doubtful whether it would have wielded an important influence. As it happens it was the playwrights who treated native and folk elements who most won the imagination of the people of Ireland and of the outside world. Among the earliest doctrines of the theater had been the idea that through a study of the Irish language and folklore the Irish people would come into their own as a people. An interesting early production by the theater had been Douglas Hyde's folk-play *The Twisting of the Rope*. The Irish folk strains came back into the theater through two types of writers. Some like Synge and Lady Gregory had already practiced the more refined forms of literature and now took up the treatment of folk materials as a result of conscious decision. Other playwrights came directly from the soil and wrote of the life they knew at first hand.

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J. M. Synge Among the writers brought forth by the Irish National Theater there is no question that J. M. Synge is the greatest. At least two of Synge's plays, *Riders to the Sea* and *The Playboy of the Western World*, will probably take a lasting place in the list of the great plays of our era. John Millington Synge (1871-1909) studied in Trinity College, went to Paris, became interested in music and the symbolist poets; thence by the influence of Yeats returned to the Aran Islands to saturate himself in the life of primitive people. His literary career is wrapped up in his work for the Abbey Theater. In *The Well of the Saints* and *In the Shadow of the Glen* he is not without influence from Maeterlinck and the symbolist poets. In *Deirdre of the Sorrows* he treats a subject which has also been treated by George W. Russell and by Yeats. Some of Synge's ideas on playwriting are suggested in his Prefaces to *The Playboy of the Western World* and *The Tinker's Wedding*; his ideas on the people of the Aran Islands are contained in the two books *In Wicklow*, 1906, and *In West Kerry*, 1907. He thought that poetry had gone too far in pursuit of abstraction, that the realities of life were to-day dealt with only in "joyless and pallid words." It is important in considering the work of Synge that we view him as a poet and not as a naturalist. In going back to the people he was probing the materials of living tragedy and comedy. In studying the people's speech he did much toward revivifying the language of the theater.

Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, 1904, is in the strict sense of the word a fragment of the life of the people in the fishing coasts of the Aran Islands. *The Playboy of the Western World*, 1907, is based on a story told in the Aran Islands

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of a Connaught man who had killed his father with a spade and had been protected by the natives. Other plays of Synge are *In the Shadow of the Glen*, 1903, *The Well of the Saints*, 1905, *The Tinker's Wedding*, 1909, *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, 1910.

W. B. Yeats (1865-) the literary genius of the Irish National Theater, wrote short and long plays in verse on the legendary themes of Ireland. Among these are *The Countess Cathleen*, 1892, *The Land of Heart's Desire*, 1894, *The Shadowy Waters*, 1900, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, 1902, *The Hour Glass*, prose, 1903, *The King's Threshold*, 1903, *Deirdre*, 1906.

Lady Augusta Gregory (1859-) wrote many short folk-plays in prose, including *Spreading the News*, 1904, *Hyacinth Halvey*, 1906, *The Gaol Gate*, 1906, *The Rising of the Moon*, 1907, *The Workhouse Ward*, 1908, *The Golden Apple*, 1916.

Two Irishmen, not directly connected with the Irish National Theater, wrote plays of power and originality. Lord Dunsany (1878-) wrote among other plays *The Glittering Gate*, 1909, *King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior*, 1911, *The Gods of the Mountain*, 1911, *The Tents of the Arabs*, 1914, *A Night at an Inn*, 1916. St. John Ervine (1883-) wrote *Mixed Marriage*, 1911, *Jane Clegg*, 1913, *John Ferguson*, 1915, and other plays.

Other playwrights of the Irish theater are William Boyle, Padraic Colum, George Fitzmaurice, Douglas Hyde, Edward Martyn, Rutherford Mayne, George Moore, T. C. Murray, Seumas O'Brien, Sean O'Casey, Padraic Pearse, Lennox Robinson.

BRITISH REPERTORY AND PROVINCIAL THEATERS

*New
organization
in England*

Hardly less important than the Irish National Theater in encouraging the development of new playwrights was the movement in Eng-

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land for new systems of organization. This movement grew directly out of the difficult situation of the British playwright under British commercial management. In these new theater organizations there were two general objectives:

- (1) The establishment of repertory theaters pledged to the support of good plays and encouraging dramatic authorship by opposing the long run system;
- (2) The establishment of theaters in the provinces for the production of original plays and to serve the art needs of these places.

Chief repertory theaters

Among the chief repertory theaters were the Court, Kingsway, and Savoy Theaters, and Charles Frohman's Duke of York's Theater.

The Court Theater, established in 1904 by Granville Barker and J. E. Vedrenne, was a veritable father of playwrights. During its four years of existence it gave 988 performances in thirty-two plays by seventeen authors. To this theater is very largely due the popular acceptance of the plays of Shaw. The Court Theater also introduced Galsworthy to the British audience. Other repertory theaters are the Everyman, Hampstead; The Lyric, Hammersmith; and the Century, Notting Hill. Among the chief provincial repertory theaters of England are The Abbey Theater, Dublin, established 1903, and the Gaiety, Manchester, established 1907, both by Miss Horniman; the Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Huddersfield Theaters. It is an indication of the achievements of these London and provincial theaters that upon some one or more of them depended either the launching or support of Shaw, Galsworthy, Barker,

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Masefield, Drinkwater, Maugham, Hankin, Houghton, Sowerby, Baker, Francis, and D. H. Lawrence.

John Galsworthy (1867-) To understand Galsworthy the dramatist we have to consider Galsworthy the novelist. He learned his craft in the novel at the school of the greatest Russian and French naturalists. He carries over into the drama an influence from Coppée, Flaubert, Maupassant, and Dostoyevsky as well as from the dramatists Hauptmann, Hervieu, and Chekhov. Galsworthy's ideal is methodical observation, deliberation, serenity, and objectiveness. His drama is always held rigorously in check, but always has an inner vibrancy. Galsworthy is profoundly interested in the moral life of man, not as sensation, or as thought, but as the penetration of ethical controls into living. He entered the theater at a fortunate time for himself and for the stage. His first plays were produced by the repertory theaters. He never had, therefore, that sense of hampering limitation enforced by the commercial stages. He has written to please himself, and to express his own visions. Galsworthy is a craftsman in the best sense of the word, in that he has the ability to translate the facts of life into stage terms. He takes advanced social positions but he prides himself upon his balance and dispassionateness. In his view a drama should have a spire of meaning: all its groupings should suggest an inherent moral.

Galsworthy's chief plays: *The Silver Box*, 1906, *Joy*, 1907, *Strife*, 1909, *Justice*, 1910, *The Little Dream*, 1911, *The Pigeon*, 1912, *The Eldest Son*, 1912, *The Mob*, 1914, *The Little Man*, 1915, *The Skin Game*, 1920, *Windows*, 1922, *Loyalties*, 1922, *Old English*, 1924.

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Granville Barker One of the supreme artists of the English stage is Granville Barker. Unlike most English playwrights Barker had a thorough training in the complexities of production while writing his plays. Barker is the dramatist of the civic man and woman; of the intimacies of political society. His plays deal with men and women who have sunk their thoughts into the subconscious. He does not deal with ideas as such but with the allusive shadows of ideas. His plays reveal command of suggestion, fineness of insight, hardness of line, aristocracy of temper. To make them more noteworthy they are wrought with a first class wisdom, cogent opinions on things that matter and a deeply tragic sense. There are suggestions in Barker of the flavors of many, of Musset, Chekhov, Meredith, Shaw and Schnitzler. But he is always himself. He is the master of the unspoken, the creator of rare groups.

Barker's chief plays: *The Marrying of Anne Leete*, 1902, *Prunella* (with Lawrence Housman), 1904, *The Voysey Inheritance*, 1905, *Waste*, 1907, *The Madras House*, 1910, *Farewell to the Theater*, 1916, *The Secret Life*, 1923.

John Drinkwater John Drinkwater, who came out of the Birmingham Repertory Theater, had written several short plays in verse when he attracted the attention of the world by a new type of biographical drama. In the famous play, *Abraham Lincoln* (1918), Drinkwater was doing far more than write a dramatic biography. He was delivering in terms of poetry a message on spiritual values to his age, showing these values instinct in a great man. Poetically the work is of high order; as a piece of stagecraft it is a masterpiece.

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Drinkwater's other plays: *Rebellion*, 1914, *The Storm*, 1915, *The God of Quiet*, 1916, *Mary Stuart*, 1921, *Oliver Cromwell*, 1921, *Robert E. Lee*, 1923.

Other playwrights of the British theater

Among other playwrights brought forth by the new organization of the British theater are some of the most gifted and individual geniuses of recent English drama. These include St. John Hankin, Stanley Houghton, Elizabeth Baker, Githa Sowerby, J. O. Francis, D. H. Lawrence, John Masefield and Ashley Dukes.

Stanley Houghton (1881-1913) wrote, for the Manchester Repertory Theater, comedies including *The Dear Departed*, 1908, *The Younger Generation*, 1910, and *Hindle Wakes*, 1912.

St. John Hankin (1860-1909) wrote *The Two Mr. Wetherbys*, 1903, *The Return of the Prodigal*, 1905, *The Charity that Began at Home*, 1906, *The Cassilis Engagement*, 1907, *The Last of the De Mullins*, 1908.

John Masefield (1875-) wrote *The Tragedy of Nan*, 1908, *The Tragedy of Pompey the Great*, 1910, *The Faithful*, 1915.

Elizabeth Baker wrote *Chains*, 1909, *Miss Tassey*, 1910, *The Price of Thomas Scott*, 1913.

Githa Sowerby wrote *Rutherford and Son*, 1912.

J. O. Francis wrote *Change*, 1913.

D. H. Lawrence wrote *The Widowing of Mrs. Holdroyd*, 1914.

Harold Chapin (1886-1916) wrote *Augustus in Search of a Father*, 1914, *It's the Poor as 'elps the Poor*, 1915.

Other dramatists are Harold Brighouse, Allan Monkhouse, Basil Dean, Charles McEvoy, Halcott Glover, Cosmo Hamilton, Oliphant Down, Gilbert Cannan, Noel Coward, Clemence Dane, C. K. Munro, George Calderon, Ashley Dukes.

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

THE NEW AMERICAN DRAMA

*Raised
standards of
commercial
drama*

The local movements in America looking toward the establishment of a new theater were at least a decade later than they were in England. At the turn of the century the playwrights of the commercial theater were turning their hands toward more ambitious types of work. Clyde Fitch and David Belasco, William Vaughn Moody and Eugene Walter represent the high marks of the first decade of the century. Finally in 1909 came the establishment of the New Theater, followed a few years later by various local producing societies dedicated to the new art of the theater.

Clyde Fitch (1865-1909), a playwright who carried the French order of play to its highest perfection in America, wrote among other plays: *Beau Brummell*, 1890, *Nathan Hale*, 1898, *Barbara Frietchie*, 1889, *The Climbers*, 1901, *The Girl with the Green Eyes*, 1902, *Her Own Way*, 1903, *The Truth*, 1906.

David Belasco (1859-) wrote *The Return of Peter Grimm*, 1911.

William Vaughn Moody (1869-1910) wrote *The Fire Bringer*, *The Masque of Judgment*, before writing for the professional stage *The Great Divide*, 1906, *The Faith Healer*, 1909.

Eugene Walter (1876-) wrote *Paid in Full*, 1907, *The Easiest Way*, 1908.

Edward Sheldon (1886-) wrote *Salvation Nell*, 1908, *The Nigger*, 1909, *Romance*, 1913, *The Garden of Paradise*, 1914.

Langdon Mitchell (1862-) wrote two high comedies, *Becky Sharp*, 1899, and *The New York Idea*, 1906.

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Emergence of Russian drama

By the beginning of the new century Russia was ready to enter into the arena of the world drama. And when she did so she entered as a principal player and not in a minor rôle. Two forces had been working to prepare Russia for the part she was to play in world theater:

- (1) The vigorous cry of "Russia for the Russians" had encouraged her writers to seek inspiration in the characteristic genius of the Russian people rather than in foreign styles;
- (2) The organization of the Moscow Art Theater had provided the first producing mechanism constructed entirely for the art of the theater.}

Anton Chekhov

The chief product of the Moscow Art Theater and one of the great playwrights of modern times is Anton Chekhov. Chekhov is supremely a naturalist in the artistic as distinguished from the sociological sense of that term. In his hands playwriting approaches to the standards of music. Chekhov is interested intensely in the realms of high cultivation. The life of his dramas is lived on the level of the mind. In this respect he is like Granville Barker, who shares some of his best qualities. The difference between the two lies in the differences between the Russian and the British mind. The British mind is keyed to comedy, it is brittle, it flashes allusively. The Russian mental temper is melancholy; through it is the sense of "useless things." The characters of Chekhov are so sophisticated, so skilled in the tricks of their game of living, and so weary, that their language is like a code of cryptograms and innuendos. Out of this material, half fantastic, half evanescent, his

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plays are made. But though the symbols are light and airy they imply a tragic substance. Chekhov had the scientist's power of dispassionate observation. He loved the Russian people but above all he knew them and could judge them. And he lived in a period of portent. In his work there is always a shadow of doom, but a doom lightly conceived, too inevitable to be feared.

What P. P. Howe calls "the corporate character of a group" is Chekhov's chief mastery in technique as it is Barker's. His qualities are objectiveness, luminosity, simplicity. "I always insist that it is not the artist's business to solve problems that require a specialist's knowledge." Born 1860 the son of an emancipated serf, Chekhov's early life brought him into contact with music, medicine, theater, military, academic and literary circles. He started by writing short literary sketches of concentrated power. He was drawn into the theater first by Korsh and then by Stanislavsky. Throughout his life he was pursued by the disease that killed him at the age of forty-four. His chief plays: *Ivanov*, 1887, *The Bear*, 1888, *The Tragedian in Spite of Himself*, 1888, *The Swan Song*, 1889, *The Proposal*, 1889, *The Seagull*, 1896, *Uncle Vanya*, 1897, *Three Sisters*, 1900, *The Wedding*, 1903, *The Anniversary*, 1903, *The Cherry Orchard*, 1904.

Maxim
Gorky
(1868-

) The author of one of the great plays of our times, Gorky was always confused between his art and the urge to deliver a message.

The result is that while his artistry is fine and precise, his knowledge of men deep and sympathetic, he often burdens his plays with purpose. Gorky, whose pseudonym "the bitter" is an indication of his temper, was drawn into the theater by Chekhov and by him tutored in some

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of his dramatic experiments. His greatest play, *The Lower Depths*, 1902, is a piece to set beside *The Weavers* as a triumph of naturalism.

Other plays by Gorky: *The Middle Class*, 1901, *A Country House*, 1903, *Children of the Sun*, 1905, *The Last Ones*, 1908, *Odd People*, 1910, *The Judge*, 1915.

Other Russian dramatists of the "turn of the Century" were M. P. Artsybáshev, Sholom Ash, Alexander Blok, Y. Byelyáev, Eugen Chirikov, Ósip Dymov, S. Náydenov, I. N. Potápenko, Victor Protopópov, Alexander Sumbátov, I. Surguchév, S. S. Yushkévich. Two others, Leonid Andreyev and Nicholas Evreinov will be treated in the last chapter.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE NEW ART OF THE THEATER

Drama as Art rather than Craft — Naturalism in Production — The Meiningen Players — Richard Wagner's Conceptions of Drama — Drama an Art of Synthesis — Music, Design, Light, Dance — New Art Theaters

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, First Series:

The Scarecrow, by Percy MacKaye.

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, Second Series:

The Yellow Jacket, by George C. Hazelton and J. H. Benrimo.

A retrospect IN the first chapter we outlined the various factors making up a play as follows: (1) the factor derived from literary tradition; (2) the factor derived from folk strains; (3) the factor derived from current social psychology; (4) the factor derived from the collaboration of the other arts. Of these four factors the first three have already been considered. We have seen the literary drama changed and solidified by the infusion of popular and folk interests. We have seen this new popular drama in turn energized by the currents and cross-currents of social opinion and passion. We have now to see this drama becoming conscious of itself as art. And we have to study the measures taken to broaden the technique of drama by enlarging the productive factors of the play and by employing the resources of the other arts.

*Drama
as art*

It is worthy of note that it is only within very recent years that the drama has been spoken of as an art. While the drama was a department of litera-

ture its artistic features were minimized by comparison with its social, educational, and entertainment functions. Men spoke of the art of stage production, but seldom of the art of play composition. This was supposed to be a craft in which a certain amount of skill was displayed, but not an art in which the creative imagination of the playwright was employed. Particularly noticeable is the condescending attitude that novelists have taken regarding the practice of stage art. Because playwriting was a "realm of absurdities," to use Pinero's ironic phrase, Dickens and Thackeray, Stevenson and Meredith were unable to succeed in playwriting as they had succeeded in the novel. When the drama had been purified of clap-trap, Barrie and Galsworthy, who had been trained in the novel, were able to turn to the theater with an equal freedom and mastery.

*Drama as
"art of
arts"*

The conception of playwriting as a creative art comparable in dignity to the arts of painting and music may be dated from the time when the idea of drama as a branch of literature was dropped in favor of the idea that the theater is an independent art. This latter conception goes back to two sources:

- (1) To the experiments of the naturalistic playwrights which did much to uncover the deeper principles of representation in the theater;
- (2) To the experiments of the new producers and stage designers who were enriching the expressive resources of the stage by means of requisitions upon the other arts.

From these two sources there came eventually the con

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ception of the play as an "art of arts." Instead of a subordinate branch of literature drama was now considered to be a synthesis of the arts of music, design, sculpture, and the dance.

The naturalistic movement in production There remains to be sketched a subject that had great significance in the development of the art theater. This is the naturalistic movement in the production of plays, which originated in the middle of the nineteenth century and came to its culmination in the Moscow Art Theater. In the development of naturalism of production various factors had place. The movement arose in connection with the production of Shakespeare's plays in the effort to apply to the production of the play the same principles of fidelity to nature that were coming to be employed in play composition. Attaching itself to the romantic play this naturalistic system of production called for two orders of precision:

- (1) Historical accuracy in costuming and in archaeological effects;
- (2) Naturalistic fidelity in the handling of stage crowds and stage actions.

Sketch of the movement Probably the first important producer to apply these principles was Charles Kean, in his Shakespearean revivals of 1852 and the following years. In these he sought "a true and complete image of the history and customs of a people." From England these principles moved to Germany and were adopted by the Company of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. Thence they spread to all countries and became the gov-

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erning principles of production in Otto Brahm's Deutsches Theater at Berlin, the Shakspeare-Bühne at Munich of Director Savits, Heinrich Laube's Burg Theater at Vienna, and in the companies of Henry Irving and Beer-bohm-Tree in England, Augustin Daly and David Belasco in New York, and in the famous Moscow Art Theater.

The famous Meiningen Players, supported by the Herzog George of Meiningen were organized in the early seventies. The great years of the Meiningen Theater covered the seventeen seasons from 1874 to 1890. During this period the Meiningen Court Theater did much to spread its principles abroad over Europe. It visited thirty-eight cities, twenty in Germany, two in Holland, five in Russia, five in Austria, two in Belgium, and one each in Switzerland, England, Denmark, and Sweden. A total of 2591 performances was given in all. The plays were as a rule romantic plays from the drama of England and Germany, though something was done for the "new" dramatists, notably Ibsen, Björnson, and Tolstoy. The Meiningen production of *Julius Cæsar*, May, 1874, is said to mark an epoch in modern theater history. Particularly notable was this company for the success displayed in subjecting all factors to an artistic objective. The Meiningen Players are famous for developing "the collective personality of a group," for dispensing with the star system, for elevating the powers of the director, and for accuracy in costuming and effects.

*Wagner's
conceptions
of drama*

For years the naturalistic theories of Kean and the Meiningen Players exercised a controlling influence over the more ambitious producers. Meanwhile there was arising an opposing theory of drama which was to have even greater influence. Significantly this was to come, not from a playwright or

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dramatic producer, but from the great musician and composer, Richard Wagner. In order to understand how Wagner happens to influence the drama we have to inquire as to his particular theories of the opera. When grand opera was first invented, it was created as a means of bringing back to the theater the ancient conceptions of Greek drama. Musical drama had been the product of sixteenth-century Italy in an effort to employ recitative to elevate the effect of Greek tragedy. Gradually the musical factor had got control, and grand opera as developed in France and Italy had thoroughly externalized dramatic art by means of music and stage effects. In large groups of modern opera the libretto is but a scaffolding upon which to hang the products of the composer's imagination and the stage manager's skill. Meanwhile many pleas had been made to reunite the fields of opera and drama and restore Greek majesty. Schiller had hoped that tragedy of the highest order would grow out of the opera as from the chorus of Bacchic festivals. But it had remained for Wagner to return dramatic quality to the music of the time. In so doing he did more. He brought the dramatic back to the theater.

*Richard
Wagner's
influence on
the drama*

Richard Wagner (1813-83), poet, dramatist, composer, and humanitarian, was one of the great geniuses of the modern world. His chief compositions are more than transcendent musical works. They are original works of dramatic creativeness, employing poetically the mediums of verse, music, light, scenery, and dance. It is by considering these great compositions in the light of the ideas behind them that we come to apprehend the important in-

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fluence of Wagner not only upon music, but upon the art of the theater. Wagner believes that the "unified art work" which had existed among the Greeks might exist again if we had composers with genius enough to think in extended terms. Because our creators have only a narrow view, they have broken dramatic art up into its parts, rhetoric, sculpture, painting, and music. He looked for a revolution in mankind that would bring back such an art and attach it to our times. Only a united art can express the majesty of man. He sees opera, which had become a monument of the corruption of artistic taste, raised again to higher values. And so he offers the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or joint production of all the arts. At the center of this creativeness there would be the dramatic impulse. This would express the emotions through elevated themes of legendary or historic matter by the mediums of poetry, music, and dances and scenery. Wagner consciously followed the Greeks in choosing subjects from the mythology of his own people. In his treatment he eliminated detail and simplified situations. Psychology was subordinated to broad ethical value. He interpreted but did not seek to depict life. His orchestra assumed many of the functions of the Greek chorus. His attitude toward music and drama is summed up in the words that "a means of expression [music] has been made the object while the object of expression [the drama] has been made a means."

Wagner's ideas of dramatic art are contained in his essays: *Die Kunst und die Revolution*, 1849, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, 1850, *Oper und Drama*, 1851. His chief works in music drama are: *Der Ring des Nibelung*, 1853, *Das Rheingold*, 1854, *Die Walküre*, 1856, *Siegfried*,

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1871, *Die Götterdämmerung*, 1874, *Tristan und Isolde*,
1859, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, 1868, *Parsifal*,
1882.

*Drama a
synthetic
art*

If these theories of Wagner's have any value, then drama is indeed a different and far greater art than it had been supposed to be in modern times. Recent years had thinned drama down to the literary factor. Wagner raised it up again by giving it body and volume, the breath of life out of the spirit of the people. And so in the practice of Wagner and the many who follow his ideas we find new and rich relationships growing up between drama and music, drama and dynamic design, drama and eurythmic action. The end of the century brought practical evidences of tendencies in these directions. As so often before these came from the popular theater in the form of vaudevilles, revues, operas-comiques. In the early years of the century it had been only the popular dramatists, Scribe, Meilhac and Halévy, and Planché who wrote librettos for operas. At the end of the century Maeterlinck and Hofmannsthal were writing libretti for music. And new ideas of design arose, some of these also tracing directly back to Wagner. From working with Wagner, Appia comes to his experiments with light. And as an example of dynamic symmetry George Fuchs starts the "relief" stage at the Munich Künstler Theater. Men like Leon Bakst and Josef Urban came out of Russia, Paris, and Vienna to add new dimensions to the action of the play. America had her part in the inception of the movement. Back in the eighties Steele MacKaye, the first dynamic genius brought forth by the American theater, had foreseen the place

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that the ballet might sometime take in the art of the theater, and in enthusiasm for Delsarte had led the way to Dalcroze. The synthetic ideal, as expressed in Craig's words, "The art of the theater is neither acting nor the play, it is not scene nor dance, but it consists of all the elements of which these things are composed," was coming to pass.

Effects of these ideas Manifestly these ideas seemed to imply a dislocation in the ordinary processes of dramatic composition. Heretofore the author had been the initiating force. But now initiative had been taken by other artists, lighting experts, painters, even musicians. There can be no doubt that the effect was at first one of confusion to authors. As new theaters were built to produce by the new systems of production their directors were compelled to turn back to the works of older playwrights which they interpreted by modern methods. Primitive plays from Greece, Italy, the Orient, Germany, and France were reinterpreted. And some playwrights began to write for the new style of production. Maeterlinck, Wilde, Hofmannsthal, d'Annunzio, Voellmoeller, Percy MacKaye prepared the scripts of plays which were more than literary products, which gave directions for expression through several mediums. Masques, puppets, and the conventions of the harlequinade were employed anew.

New art theaters New theaters were established designed for use in the new art of the stage. Taking a leading place in this new art was Max Reinhardt. Coming out of a minor place in the Deutsches Theater in Berlin Max Reinhardt (1873-) rose to be director of this

THE NEW ART OF THE THEATER

theater, to create new ideas in dramatic production, to put fear in the hearts of the weaker playwrights, and opportunity in the hands of the more imaginative composers for the theater. Reinhardt first established a cabaret, Schall und Rauch, in which a new idea of production based upon sportiveness was employed. In the Berlin Kleines Theater, derived from Schall und Rauch, he introduced the idea of intimacy and subtlety of *rappor*t. After this he had many associations, each representing a distinct variety of theatrical experiment, in the Neues Theater, in the Kammerspielhaus, in the Munich Künstler Theater, in the Grosses Schauspielhaus, and finally in the Salsburg Festspielhaus established in 1917, and in his great productions in London and in New York. In all of these, various as they are, Reinhardt stands for an unliterary theater of primitive materials entering fully into the nature of man, the audience playing its part in the action in the spirit of festivals, carnivals, games or worship, but never as spectators or auditors waiting to be impressed from without.

New art theaters The strangest thing about this new movement was that theaters were built before plays were provided to fill them. The earliest organizers of these theaters depended frankly upon the idea that this was a producers' movement and that the classics of the past would have to be employed. But always, of course, these works of the past were to be renewed by a modern method. It was in this spirit that the Munich Shakspeare-Bühne was organized in 1889 by Karl Von Perfall and Jocza Savits, the "Intimate" Theater in Munich and the Sezessionsbühne in Berlin. It was so that the Mos-

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cow Art Theater was established in 1897 by Nemírovich-Dánchenko and Constantin Stanislávsky. Other theaters followed in all countries of Europe and America. In France the art theater movement spread to include the Théâtre d'Art of Paul Fort, the Théâtre de l'Œuvre of Lugne-Poë, the Théâtre de l'Application, the Comédie des Champs Elysées, the Vieux Colombier of Jacques Copeau, the Théâtre des Arts of Jacques Rouché. And every capital saw an equal number of theaters dedicated to a new ideal in theatrical production.

*Other
changes in
stage art*

Meanwhile important changes were taking place in the social and æsthetic conceptions underlying the art of the stage. The audience was coming, as we have seen, to take a new part in the production. From being irresponsible observer it was becoming participant. These changes of psychology involved changes of theater architecture and changes as well in systems of production, even of lighting. Important among the changes of architecture were the development of "little" or "intimate" theaters. These terms referred not only to size of theaters, but to systems of production as well. One of the greatest theater architects in the world, Max Littmann, of Germany, was active in experimentation in relations between audience and the action of the play. The proscenium arch disappeared or was modified. Lighting systems were changed. The auditorium was treated as a unit instead of as a congeries of units on three or more levels. Over against the intimate theater the idea of the great circus theater was upheld in the Grosses Schauspielhaus of Berlin, the Cirque d'hiver of Fermin Gemier, of Paris.

THE NEW ART OF THE THEATER

*New con-
ceptions of
composition*

All this may appear to be but distantly related with the work of the playwright. But it has a very near relation both to playwrights and to forms of drama. Since the days when Le Bon's theory of crowd psychology had been rather crudely imposed upon the idea of dramatic composition a change had taken place in the conception of the function of the artist. Croce had taken the place of Le Bon as the philosopher of the art of the theater. And Croce magnified the creative artist, by holding that the work of art is entirely the product of the creator, that it exists in his mind and is complete even before it has come to external expression. Of course such a theory as this implies a great liberalizing of structure. More than this it implied a strengthening of the individual and adventurous spirit of the artist. It justified the artist by inner necessity rather than by outer adaptation. Basing their hopes on Croce's "all expression is art," artists of a new dynamic intensity and creativeness were entering the theater. At first, it is true, it appeared that playwrights were confused by events which were taking the old stage away from them before their eyes. But a new generation of playwrights was on the way, worthy, as we shall see in our final chapters, of a new theater.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

COMEDY AND FANTASY

New Vogue of Comedy — Comedy in England, Germany, France — **The Fantastic Play** — J. M. Barrie — First Phase of his Work — His Fantastic Plays — Jacinto Benavente — A Cosmopolitan Playwright — Other Spanish Dramatists

In Chief Contemporary Dramatists, Second Series:

Our Betters, by W. Somerset Maugham.

Pasteur, by Sacha Guitry; translated by Irving Brown.

Moral, by Ludwig Thoma; translated by Charles Recht.

Das Konzert, by Hermann Bahr; translated as *The Concert* by B. Q. Morgan.

The Bonds of Interest, by Jacinto Benavente; translated by J. G. Underhill.

In Contemporary Plays:

The Mollusc, by Hubert Henry Davies.

The Circle, by W. Somerset Maugham.

Hindle Wakes, by Stanley Houghton.

The Unchastened Woman, by L. K. Anspacher.

Mary the Third, by Rachel Crothers.

Drama in the first quarter of the twentieth century As we look back over the record of the drama in the first quarter of the twentieth century we find a strange reversal of values. The romantic revival has subsided. The well-made play, the problem play, even stark naturalism seem to have lost validity. Symbolism was never strong enough to establish a school in the theater. Among the forms of drama that remain two are impressive for vitality, the frankly innovating and experimental play, and comedy.

The new vogue of comedy There are good reasons for the apparent vitality of comedy. One of these has to do with the ever-growing popularity of Bernard Shaw. Another reason lies in reaction against the pur-

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poseful dullness that has characterized much drama since Ibsen. Dullness and serious intent are sure ere long to turn upon themselves in humor and self-judgment. The new comedy which arose in England, France, and Germany was in general of three classes:

- (1) It applied to the treatment of present foibles and affectations a mordant satire and irony;
- (2) It turned its regard downward from the treatment of the "chosen" people to the sympathetic interpretation of the "little man."
- (3) It threw around commonplace events a note of playfulness that in some cases approached the fantastic.

*A rapid
survey of
comedy*

No purpose would be served by studying in detail the manifestations of the comic spirit in different countries. More than any other form comedy is universal. Differences of quality and temper exist in different countries. For instance, the English theater represents the high comedy mode. French comedy tends to be playful, light, and fanciful; American comedy is at the moment glorifying the little inconsequential man. In no country are the qualities of comedy more striking than they are in Germany. Says Meredith, "The German literary laugh is infrequent, and rather monstrous — never a laugh of men and women in concert. It comes of unrefined abstract fancy, grotesque or grim or gross." The comedy of the last decades in Germany partly proves this, partly disproves. It has been ironic, bitter, disposed to uncover the weaknesses and vice in German life, but with a new and tonic energy, honesty, and decision.

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Chief among the writers of the new comedy in England were Hubert Henry Davies (1869-1917), author among other plays of *Mrs. Gorrings's Necklace*, 1903, *Cousin Kate*, 1903, *The Mollusc*, 1907, *A Single Man*, 1910, *Outcast*, 1914; and William Somerset Maugham (1874-), who combines with a light and even careless method a power of scathing analysis and heartless exposition. Chief plays: *A Man of Honour*, 1903, *Jack Straw*, 1908, *Mrs. Dot*, 1908, *Smith*, 1909, *The Tenth Man*, 1910, *The Land of Promise*, 1913, *Our Betters*, 1917, *Cæsar's Wife*, 1919, *The Circle*, 1921, *The Constant Wife*, 1926.

Other writers of English comedies are Alfred Sutro, author of *John Glayde's Honour*, 1907, and other plays; A. A. Milne, author of *The Dover Road*, *Mr. Pim Passes By*, and others; C. K. Munro, author of *At Mrs. Beam's*; Noel Coward, Frederick Lonsdale.

Representative American writers of comedy are L. K. Anspacher, author of *The Unchastened Woman*; Jesse Lynch Williams, author of *Why Marry?*; A. E. Thomas, Thompson Buchanan, Louis Evan Shipman, Arthur Richman, G. S. Kaufman, Marc Connolly. A promising gift is that of George Kelly, author of *The Torch Bearers*, *The Show off*, and *Craig's Wife*.

German comedy is represented by Hermann Bahr (1863-), author among others of *Der Apostel*, 1901, *Der Meister*, 1903, *Der arme Narr*, 1905, *Das Konzert*, 1909, *Kinder*, 1910; Ludwig Thoma (1867-1921), author of *Die Lokalbahn*, 1902, *Moral*, 1908. The outstanding figure of contemporary German comedy is Carl Sternheim (1881-), a follower of Shaw and Tolstoy, who brings to the practice of comedy a deeply serious purpose. Sternheim deals in a cold, ironic analysis of bourgeois life and morals. In a dramatic cycle entitled *Aus dem bürgerlichen Heldenleben*, 1908-13, are the following plays: *Die Hose*, *Die Kassette*, *Bürger Schippel*, *Der Snob*, *Perle-*

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berg, *Der Kandidat*; another work is *Die Marquise von Arcis*, 1920.

Chief among the writers of comedy in France is the frivolous but firm and graceful gift of Sacha Guitry (1885-), author of a score or more of light pieces and the more serious *Pasteur*, 1919, and *Deburau*, 1918. Among other writers of comedy in French are Fernand Crommelynck, author of the farce *Le Cocu magnifique*; Georges Feydeau, Francis de Croisset, Paul Gavault.

Comedy and fantasy It is in the third type of comedy mentioned above that the most distinctive note has been struck in the comedy of our times. Throughout the currents of drama we have observed a tendency to pass beyond the barriers of logic into the regions of pure imagination. This tendency was present early in the nineteenth century in the fantastic comedies of Musset. Traces of it are present at the end of the century in the *comédie fantaisiste* of Banville and Gautier, and later in the work of Rostand. As the new century breaks it becomes more manifest. As we shall see, it was by way of the drama of fantasy that Spain takes her place in the world theater in the work of Benavente. From Spain, the fantasist movement moves to Hungary and Austria, taking on there a new vitality by which to pass into the external theater.

J. M. BARRIE

Qualities of Barrie's work Two men stand at the top of the fantasist movement. These are J. M. Barrie, of England, and Jacinto Benavente, of Spain. Almost without contact with the reforming drama of the Continent, Barrie jumps from the practice of the conventional drama to way-breaking experiment. Barrie

had been known as a novelist and successful author of popular plays. In his plays there had been shown a refinement of subtlety, attenuation of spiritual motives, technical ingenuity, and a dependence upon charm and sentiment. From his early manhood he had been an opponent of the "intellectualistic" drama represented by Ibsen. He had employed his wit to burlesque these types of plays. And yet, after Strindberg, he is one of the most important modern playwrights in extending the formulas of play construction.

*Sketch of
Barrie's life* J. M. Barrie was born May 9, 1860, at Kirriemuir, in Forfarshire, Scotland. Educated at Dumfries Academy and Edinburgh University, he turned to literature and made his native town famous as Thrums. In his earliest contacts with the theater he established his attitude toward the "new" drama by writing for Toole's Theater *Ibsen's Ghost, or Toole up-to-date*, 1891. This was followed by *Walker, London*, a play in the Robertson-H. J. Byron school of comedy. After writing an inconsequential comic opera with A. Conan Doyle, he next wrote *The Professor's Love Story*, 1894, a sentimental character comedy which had a success on two continents. In *The Little Minister*, acted at the Haymarket, November 6, 1897 Barrie rose to a new station. The play is conventional enough, but there are in it strains of beauty not recently found on the English stage, and an expertness that indicated that a new craftsman had arrived in the theater. After writing *The Wedding Guest*, 1900, an error in which Barrie surrendered to the Scandinavian influence, he comes into his own with *The Admirable Crichton*, 1902. This is one of the great plays of the time. Here Barrie's

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freedom and mastery of hand served to the contrivance of a play of incomparable beauty and deep meaning. The following plays, *Quality Street*, 1902, and *Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire*, 1905, go further to emphasize Barrie's individual quality in the theater. In the modernized Jane Austen note of the first there is unreality, and the second is marred by over-sentimentality. *What Every Woman Knows*, 1908, stands next to *The Admirable Crichton* in the list of Barrie's plays. Aside from a forced note in the plot in order to serve the idea, the play is in first rank.

Like Shaw and Strindberg, Barrie was interested in the one-act play, in which form, under the general caption of *Half Hours*, some of his best work was done. Short Plays: *The Twelve Pound Look*, 1910, *Old Friends*, 1910, *Rosalind*, 1912, *The Will*, 1913, *Pantaloon, or a Plea for an Ancient Family*, 1905, *Half an Hour*, 1913, *The New Word*, 1915, *The Fatal Typist*, 1915, *A Slice of Life*, 1916, *The Old Lady Shows her Medals*, 1917, *A Well-Remembered Voice*, 1918, *The Real Thing, at Last*, 1920, *Der Tag*, 1914, *The Truth about the Russian Dancers*, 1920, *Shall we Join the Ladies?* 1921.

Barrie turns to fantasy But it was when he wrote *Little Mary*, 1903, that Barrie broached the more significant field of his dramatic activity, and injected himself definitely as a leader into the "new movement of the theater." *Little Mary* was a surprise to its first audiences on account of something cryptic and jesting in its idea. Barrie called it an "uncomfortable" play. In spite of its somewhat labored ingenuity, it is doubtful whether it satisfied the author. The fantasy was not diffused through the action; it was contained in a single notion. But it evidenced

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Barrie's powers to handle the stage freely, to make his play express more than it said. The following play was more than a success. It was a triumph. *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, was produced at the Duke of York's Theater in 1904. To the play was added a year later the scene of the Marooner's Rock or the Mermaid's Lagoon. In the class of purely imaginative playful fantasy *Peter Pan* takes a place beyond anything written for the stage of our times. Though it is written primarily for children it would be a dull brain that thought it a childlike play. Its materials are in fact as much adult materials as they are those of childhood. *The Adored One*, 1913, known in America as *The Legend of Leonora*, exists in a world of fantastic topsy-turvy. If jazz had been invented at the time it was written, one would say that the action had been jazzed. There was in it a note of Gilbertian paradox. In it are playfully treated (not satirized) mother love, masculine chivalry and the dignity of the courts. After *Rosy Rapture, or The Pride of the Beauty Chorus*, 1915, in which the cinema and the new revue supplied the materials of his fantasy, Barrie writes *A Kiss for Cinderella*, 1916, in which the dream motives of Hauptmann's *Hannele* are employed for more colorful and happier ends. *Dear Brutus*, 1917, deals with the impossible (or the possible) "might have been." In the spirit of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Barrie's character of Lob sends the personages of the play for a stroll in the magic wood in which one meets the things one longs for. Likewise built upon an arbitrary presupposition is *Mary Rose*, 1920, which deals with an island in the Hebrides the inhabitants of which never grow older.

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Barrie as a dramatist Barrie's genius is so much his own that it would be difficult to generalize upon its qualities. Whatever comments are here made upon it are called for more as warnings or guides than as explanations. Unlike many modern dramatists who enlarge the formulas of the theater, Barrie is not in the least interested in mental science. He is not seeking to dramatize the subconscious or to probe deeply into the complexes of the human mind. His purpose seems to be to apply dramatic action to those unrelated realms of fancy and dreams which occupy a large place in the penumbra of consciousness without being recognized as having any true value. He takes for his figures characters who live a great deal in day dreams, children who people the world with pirates, young mothers who dream of the future, soul-hungry slaveys, the disappointed and frustrate. Out of the dreams of these he makes his plays. At the heart of each play is a supposition which you may accept or not. If you accept it the play has credibility; if you do not accept it the play is not for you. What is to be noticed is the skill with which the dramatist builds upon such faith as the audience will bring him. Few are disposed to cavil or to question the most fantastic action of a Barrie play. This implies craftsmanship of the highest order. And of course it implies much more than craftsmanship.

JACINTO BENAVENTE

Fantastic drama in Spain Long before Barrie had broken loose from the theater of convention, at the moment indeed that he was writing his satire on the Ibsen drama, Jacinto Benavente had inaugurated the fantastic drama of Spain. With Benavente Spanish drama de-

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finitely enters the world field with head high. Benavente is first of all a cosmopolitan. Few men have been subject to as wide a body of influences as he. Few have employed their influences with greater strength and individuality. Jacinto Benavente was born in Madrid in 1866, the son of a physician. He was educated at the University of Madrid and started in the law. He has had a busy life in literature. In 1899 he became director of the review *La Vida Literaria*. In 1909 with the actor Porredón he founded the children's theater in Madrid. From 1908 to 1912 he wrote weekly articles for *El Imparcial* which were later published as *El Teatro del Pueblo*. He was elected to the Spanish Academy and in 1922 was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Of more than one hundred published plays a half are dialogues, monologues, comedies, *zarzuelas*, *entremets* in two acts or less. In addition to his playwriting he has adapted and translated plays by Bulwer-Lytton, Augier, Dumas, L'Abbé Prévost, and Hervieu. He is known in America chiefly through the criticism and translations of John Garrett Underhill.

Comment on Benavente If we are to understand Benavente it is important that we apprehend that quality of individuality in cosmopolitanism that is his distinguishing trait. It was Benavente's task to bring the great world to Spain and in turn give Spain her place in the world's literature. For this reason his work, dynamic and individual as it is, can best be represented by the symbols of various kinds of playwriting practiced outside of Spain. Among his one hundred and twenty dramatic works of all kinds there are Ibsen plays, Chekhov plays,

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Gorky plays, folk-tragedies, poetical fantasies, historical plays, folk-melodramas, comedies of intellectualism. Benavente combines in one career the advance of half a century in Northern Europe. He brings Spanish drama up from Dumas, Ibsen, Becque, to the extreme modernists. When to the multiplicity of his interests one adds that he is a man of a decidedly individual stamp, some measure of the man may be given.

Nature of the fantastic If there is one quality that more than any other dominates Benavente's work it is the quality of the fantastic. We learn that, after leaving college, the chief fascination for the young man lay in an association with a circus. Like Wedekind and Andreyev he was allured by the fantastic irrelevance of clowns. In clowns you have, he said, "all the epic of human laughter from Aristophanes to Courteline." Benavente was breaking away from the controls of stupidity and the obvious. In this process there were, aside from the reactions of a scornful and healthy mind, two great influences, the fantastic romanticism of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *The Tempest* and of Musset; and, on the other hand, the antic irreverent comedy of George Bernard Shaw. "The public demands that serious things be treated frivolously, and that nonsense be taken seriously. What it will not tolerate is serious treatment of serious things, or speaking flippantly of nonsense." In this temper Benavente published in 1892 his *Teatro fantástico*, made up of ironic, graceful plays of the imagination with something of the note of Schnitzler's *Anatol*, and in their turn having a definite influence on Ferenc Molnar.

Benavente's plays: (1) Realistic satires: *Gente Conocida*, 1896, *La Comida de las Fieras* (*The Banquet of Wild Beasts*), 1898, *La Gata de Angora*, 1900, *Lo Cursi*, 1901, *La Farandula*, 1897, *La Gobernadora*, 1901; (2) plays of middle-class life: *El Hombrecito*, 1903, *Rosas de Otoño*, 1905, *Por las Nubes*, 1909, *La Losa de los Sueños*, 1911; (3) provincial plays: *Señora Ama*, 1908, *La Malquerida*, 1913; (4) fantastic and imaginative plays: *Sacrificios*, 1901, *Alma Triunfante*, 1902, *Más Fuerte que el Amor*, 1906, *Los Ojos de los Muertos*, 1907; (5) romantic comedies in the modern spirit: *La Noche del Sábado*, 1903, *La Princesa Bebé*, 1904, *La Escuela de las Princesas*, 1909, *El Dragón de Fuego*, 1903, (6) grotesques; *Los Intereses Creados* (*The Bonds of Interest*), 1907, *La Ciudad Alegre y Confiada*, 1916; (7) moralistic plays: *El Collar de Estrellas*, 1915, *Campo de Armiño*, 1916, *El Mal que Nos Hacen*, 1917, *La Inmaculada de los Dolores*, 1918, *La Ley de los Hijos*, 1918, *La Vestale de Occidente*, 1919. The above classification follows that of Walter Starkie.

FANTASY AND DELICATE IMAGINATION IN THE RECENT EUROPEAN THEATER

*The vogue
of the
delicate
imagination*

There are evidences throughout the theater of Europe, and in a lesser degree of America, of an increasing interest in plays of a delicate imaginativeness. These plays are derived from various influences running from a playful romantic fancy to religious adoration, or esoteric mystical experience. They are expressed in various forms from those of the earliest miracle and mystery play to the latest imitation of Maeterlinck's pallid forms; from the delicate fancy of the *commedia dell' arte* to sentimental and whimsical comedy. By no stretch of the imagination can all these works be grouped in a school, or even be said to

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represent a common tendency. And yet they are alike in reacting away from the cruder and more palpable impulses of the stage toward a finer web of imagination. There are intimations in these that a certain amount of grace, irrelevance, and unreason, not to speak of faith in supernatural powers, is grateful to our times. These materials playwrights of all nations have been treating, some playfully, some devoutly, some with a mystical intensity of vision.

To group the more delicately imaginative playwrights of present-day France demands the collection of diverse and widely opposed geniuses, including Paul Claudel (1868-), author of *Tête d'or*, 1891, *La Ville*, 1893, *L'Otage*, 1911, *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, 1912, *Le Pain dur*, 1918; Georges Duhamel (1884-), author of *La Lumière*, 1911, *Dans l'Ombre des statues*, 1912, *Le Combat*, 1913; H. R. Lenormand, author of *L'Homme et ses Fantômes*, *A l'Ombre du Mal*, *Les Possédés*, *Poussière*, *Les Ratés*, *Le Temps est un songe*; Lucien Népoty; Paul Hyacinthe Loyson (1873-), author of *L'Évangile du sang*, 1902, *L'Apôtre*, 1911; Albert Guinon; Fernand Vendérem, Jean Sarment, Charles Vildrac.

With the new century there was in Spain a revival of the more spirituel orders of play in the hands of Gregorio Martínez Sierra (1881-), author of *El Reino di Dios*, *Primavera en Otoño*; Serafin (1871-) and Joaquín Alvarez Quintero (1873-) seek to give for Andalusia "a handful of its wit, a piece of its streets, a corner of its houses, a flower of its flowers," authors of *Los Galeotes*, 1900, *Las Flores*, 1901, *El amor qui pasa*, 1904, *Malvaloca*, 1912; Manuel Linares Rivas (1867-), author of *La Garra*, 1914.

In Hungary the fantastic drama came to a rich development. Among the authors are Ferenc Molnár

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(1878-), author of (titles in English) *The Devil*, 1907, *Liliom*, 1909, *The Guardsman*, 1911, *The Wolf*, 1912, *The Swan*, 1914, *Fashions for Men*, 1915, *Earthly and Heavenly Love*, 1922; other Hungarian dramatists are Lajos Biro, Melchior Lengyel, Ernest Vajda.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE FUTURISTIC DRAMA

Decline of Intellectualistic Drama — Drama as Sport — The Futurist Manifesto — Frank Wedekind — Expressionism in Germany — Luigi Pirandello — The Grotesque Playwrights of Italy — The Futurist Theater in Russia — Leonid Andreyev — Nicholas Evreinov — The New Drama in America — Eugene O'Neill

In Contemporary Plays:

The Hairy Ape, by Eugene O'Neill.

The Adding Machine, by Elmer Rice.

Futurism and dra- matic art

IN our study of the history of contemporary drama we are approaching very near to the present day. Not only this. We are approaching the work of those writers of to-day who are most interested in the drama of to-morrow and are seeking to point out its path. Anything we say under this heading must therefore be considered tentative and suggestive only. In so far as our study deals with the ideas that are urging the present generation of "new" dramatists, it may have value. But there is every possibility that any definitions and judgments that are made may have to be modified in the light of future events. We have heard much of futurism in our day. What we should remember is that all art is futuristic. It occurs that our times have had more fever in the search for the paths of the future than some other times have shown. For this reason it appears that the most interesting drama of our times is qualified by unrest, uncertainty, and unsatisfied search.

Factors of the futuris- tic play

During the last ten years each country has had its futuristic movements looking to the disorganization of the old, the substitution

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of new ways in the theater. In these many factors have appeared: (1) The revolt against convention always present in the modern theater; (2) a growing tendency toward nihilism and destruction that had been in the air; (3) opposed to this a vaguely acquisitive, synthetic tendency that seeks to draw all knowledge, all speculation into a single focus; (4) the social and intellectual ferment incident to the Great War.

Decline of intellectual- istic drama

It has been the tendency in psychology of recent years to belittle the place of conscious mental processes beside the more subconscious processes. This has been the tendency in the theater as well. As time goes on the popular forms, the vaudeville, the music-hall show, the revue, the circus, tend to take a larger instead of a smaller place in the art of the theater. Under its various guises of song, dance, and variety entertainment the vaudeville has entered all the countries of Europe. In France, the *saynète*; in Spain, the *zarzuela* and the *género chico*; in Germany the *Salonstück*, and the *Überbrett* movement take important places in the art of the theater and supply many of its writers. And the future of the art of the theater comes surprisingly to be identified with cabarets like the Chauve Souris at Moscow, and the Schall und Rauch of Berlin.

Drama as sport

Closely related with all this is the new theory of drama which seeks to show that it is derived, not from the higher emotions, but from the activities of sport. Strangely enough the more drama is refined on the one side the more place there has been for the playful and irresponsible elements on the other. And

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it is usually the more advanced æsthetic taste that has demanded the more primitive impulses. As in the case of every recurring revolution in the theater, the new doctrine was accompanied by a demand for the demolition of the old conventions. The new impulses of dramatic futurism both rational and perverse, are contained in the manifesto of the futurists which appears in 1908 in the Paris *Figaro*, signed by F. T. Marinetti. Calling for the destruction of museums, libraries, moralisms, art, Marinetti demands the worship of speed, of aeroplanes. In the new art life and death shall be treated as jests. The more serious a subject, the more fantastically it is to be treated and costumed. The theater of the future will be a topsy-turvy stage of churches, bars, rinks, processions, carnivals. This view enters all arts, literature, poetry, and music. It enters the theater particularly. But it discards everything of the theater except the variety hall. Only here is life seen in its strength, wit, and nakedness. It raises animal qualities and lowers the sentiments. It destroys solemnity, seriousness, and sublimity. It looks to exaggeration, to eccentricity, to horseplay, to grotesque. The new theater will destroy the classic emotions, joys, and beauties. Beethoven, Wagner, and Shakespeare will alike disappear. The audience will be drawn into the action as in a phantasmagoria. And the drawing power will not be beauty or sublimity, but that blood lust that is found in the Roman games.

FRANK WEDEKIND

*A German
futurist*

Long before Marinetti had issued his pronouncement of the grotesque drama, the German dramatist Frank Wedekind had put the theories into

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effect. Next to Strindberg, Wedekind is the dynamic and explosive genius of the modern theater. In some respects his career gives evidence of some of that abnormality that characterized Strindberg. Viewing more closely the observer is led to doubt whether what appears to be abnormality is not rather a heightened sensitivity to the facts of life, a keen and unprejudiced understanding of the workings of the Life Force, combined with an imagination that refused to limit itself within the confines of the conventional theater. In addition to being an artist Wedekind had a mission. His sense of his mission was so strong that it tended to free him to his artistry instead of, as usually occurs, hampering him to the uses of the sermon.

Qualities of Wedekind's art

As a playwright Wedekind derives from various sources. The central source lay within himself, in a natural and unmotivated conception of the art of the theater as derived from sport rather than from thinking. His theatrical genealogy lies on the one side in the drama of the *tranche de vie*, the bitter ironic *comédie rosse* of the French theater. It lay on the other side in the open and expressionistic art of Strindberg. In the making of the art of expressionism Wedekind had almost as important a part as Strindberg himself. Like Strindberg he is a bitter anti-romantic. But he does not himself have as many emotional twinges. Like Strindberg he projects himself through suffering into the world with which he deals. He is consistently anti-bourgeois, an enemy of crudeness, ugliness, and weakness. Not thought, not ideals, constitute his Earth Spirit, but will, impulse, passion, instinct, the pushing sense of life.

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*Life of
Wedekind*

Frank Wedekind was born in 1864 in Hannover, the son of a father who had been a physician in the Orient, had taken part in the Revolution of 1848, and had then gone to America to participate in the gold rush and the Civil War. His mother was an actress who had genius and also insanity in her family. The formal education of the young man was worthless. He became a journalist, private secretary, and public reader of Ibsen under the name of Cornelius Minehaha. His gifts were first recognized by Albert Langen, the organizer of *Simplicissimus*, a periodical of which Wedekind later became political editor, meanwhile working as an actor and producer in North Germany and Munich. As editor he went to jail for *lèse majesté*; as actor played parts by Hauptmann and Halbe, sang songs in restaurants, and pursued the writing of his own plays. He was always interested in education, in the antagonisms between youth and age, between the body and the soul, and in the blind powers of nature. In 1906 Wedekind joined Max Reinhardt. He married the actress, Tilly Niemann. He died in 1918.

*Wedekind as
a playwright*

Wedekind held that Ibsen had perverted drama from life and action to principles. Nor did he accept the tenets of naturalism, which he felt was a drama of externals dealing with second-hand ideas, and with literary patter, and tending toward the weak, the introspective, irresponsible characters. It was not upon these that the world depended. In the Prologue to *Erdgeist*, Wedekind ridicules Hauptmann's sick men of *Einsame Menschen* and *Vor Sonnenaufgang*. The real drama of life comes from those who have the appetite for

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life. For the playwright who would deal with life in its true values the world is a human menagerie: "alike in comedies and dream-plays too You see but a domesticated zoo." (Prologue to *Erdegeist*.) Throughout his plays runs that Earth Spirit that is the carnal source of everything. Education, sex, art, music, passions, affections, are all to be understood only in the light of the Earth Spirit. Wedekind said in *Die junge Welt*, through the mouth of Alwa: "The curse that weighs on our generation is that everybody, including our poets, is much too literary. We know only the problems that are offered to us by learned persons. Our horizon is circumscribed by our professional interests. If we are to rise to the possibilities of a high and powerful art, we must throw ourselves as much as possible with those who have never read a book in all their lives, with those in whose simple instincts the animal predominates. . . . For twenty years dramatic literature has produced only shreds and patches of men, of men who do not procreate, of women who do not bring children into the world."

Wedekind's plays cover a wide range of subject-matter from adolescent life to the life of art, from life in circuses and menageries to the circles of harlots, from historical fantasy to stark extravaganza. Chief plays: *Die Junge Welt*, 1890, *Frühlings Erwachen, eine Kindertragödie*, 1891, *Erdegeist*, 1895, *Der Kammersänger*, 1899, *Der Marquis von Keith*, 1901, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, 1904, *So ist das Leben*, 1902, *Hidalla, oder Sein und Haben*, 1904, *Totentanz*, 1906, *Musik*, 1907, *Zensur*, 1908, *Der Stein der Weisen*, 1909, *Oaha*, 1909, *Schloß Wetterstein* in three acts (*In Allen Sätteln gerecht, Mit Allen Hunden gehetzt, In Allen Wassern gewaschen*), 1910, *Franziska*, 1912, *Leidenschaften*, 1912; *Simson, oder Scham und Eifersucht*,

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1914, *Bismarck*, 1915, *Herakles*, 1919, *Sonnenspektrum*, 1921. Wedekind was the most prolific playwright in Germany during the war years.

THE EXPRESSIONISTIC MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

Wedekind and expressionism The expressionistic movement of Germany is directly associated with the work of Wedekind. It also has its associations with the grotesque movement of Italy. In it there were various elements, some of uncertainty and some of certainty. The uncertain factors refer to the mental backgrounds which provided the substance of the new art, the perplexities that overcame the most sensitive in Germany in the midst of the new discoveries in science, the consciousness of impending social and political change, the threat of revolution and the shadow of approaching war. If in the substance there was the flex of instability, this was not the case in the æsthetic doctrines underlying the new art. Here there was the utmost certainty. The expressionists sought to do away entirely with the old enclosed art forms with their cut-and-dried symbols. They sought for an art that would be at the same time genuinely creative and true to the plunge of experience. In the words of Manfred Schneider, in *Der Expressionismus in Drama*, expressionism "designs for the stage the rhythm of music, a vast content of utterance, a perfect simplicity; it prefers types rather than well-characterized individuality; it infuses all in an atmosphere of exaltation." Expression meant the return of vision, action, and ecstasy into drama; it demanded the release of the lyric mood. Taking Strindberg's trilogy *Toward Damascus* as the model, the expressionists sought wide themes, heaven, hell, cosmos,

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humanity, and in revealing a world gave a new conception to the facts of individual life.

The expressionistic or grotesque movement in Germany has a long history and many representatives. The movement toward rebellion against rigid limitations of form is found in Herbert Eulenberg, author of *Alles um Geld* and *Alles um Liebe*, in Stefan Zweig, W. von Molo, and Richard Dehmel, who tended toward a wider allegorical form. The first German expressionistic play is said to be Reinhard Sorge's (1892-) *Der Bettler*, 1910.

Chief playwrights of expressionism:

Fritz von Unruh (1885-) *Offiziere*, 1912, *Prinz Louis Ferdinand*, 1914, *Ein Geschlecht*, 1915.

Georg Kaiser (1878-) wrote comedies, grotesques, and tragi-comedies: *Rektor Kleist*, 1905, *Die jüdische Witwe*, 1911, *Europa*, 1915, *Der Zentaur*, 1916, *Von Morgen bis Mitternacht*, 1916, *Die Versuchung*, 1917, *Die Koralle*, 1917, *Gas*, 1918, *Frauenopfer*, 1918, *Der Brand im Opennhaus*, 1918, *Hölle, Weg, Erde*, 1919.

Franz Werfel (1890-) wrote *Der Besuch aus dem Elysium*, *Die Troerinnen*, *Spiegelmensch*, 1921, *Bochsgesang*, 1922, *Maximilian und Juarez*, 1923.

Walter Hasenclever (1890-) wrote *Der Sohn*, 1914, *Der Ritter*, 1915, *Die Menschen*, 1918, *Die Entscheidung*, 1919, *Jenseits*, 1920.

Ernst Toller (1893-) wrote *Die Wandlung*, 1918, *Masse Mensch*, 1921.

Paul Kornfeld (1889-) wrote *Die Verführung*, 1917, *Himmel und Hölle*, 1919.

Other dramatists of new form are August Stamm, Hanns Jobst, Kurt Eisner, Paul Apel, Hermann Essig, Ernst Barlach, Reinhardt Göring, Oskar Kokoschka.

The new dramatic movements in Czecho-Slovakia are signalized by the work of the brothers Capek, Karel and Josef, authors of *R. U. R.*, and *The World We Live In*.

LUIGI PIRANDELLO

*Wedekind
and Piran-
dello*

If Wedekind represents the native practice of the grotesque school, Luigi Pirandello represents its conscious doctrine. Wedekind derived from the circus and the music hall in the garish halls of which the petty and grotesque tragedies of life unfold themselves. Pirandello derived from the study which had suddenly become conscious of the limitations of thought and was seeking to adapt itself to the events outside. Before Pirandello began to write plays, the way had been prepared for him in Italy by the proponents of the futurist synthetic theater, F. T. Marinetti, Emilio Settemelli, and Bruno Corra. The claims of these are too grotesque and extravagant to be coldly outlined in detail. They include (1) the abolition of outward technique; (2) the employment of discoveries in the subconscious and in the art of fantasy; (3) the mingling in the action of actor and auditor.

*Sketch of
Pirandello*

Luigi Pirandello, a Sicilian, was born at Girgenti, June 28, 1867. He was educated at Bonn, and became a professor. He himself may be said to have started the grotesque movement in *Il Fu Mattia Pascal* (*The Late Mattia Pascal*), 1904, a novel of which the action takes place upon various planes and in different zones. In the Preface to this novel Pirandello expressed the ideas that explain much of his later work: In short Pirandello holds that art has tremendously circumscribed its own powers in comparison with life by insisting upon an "idiotic verisimilitude" which is in no true sense a reflection of life. Art has closed the door to the absurdities of life, to its crazy irrelevancies.

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Once truly represented in a work of art these irrelevancies cease to be absurd; they become the very stuff of truth. Pirandello has written about four hundred short stories, all of a type in which tragedy and farce, irony and sentiment, wit and simplicity mingle. He turned to the writing of plays in 1917, drawn by the chance to experiment with his favorite themes through the flexibilities of the dramatic form. With all of Pirandello's originality his work smells of the study lamp.

Summary of Pirandello's plays In Pirandello's plays the protagonist is not a human will at odds with the world. It is a "persistent problem of philosophy." Pirandello follows Shaw as Strindberg followed Ibsen. The leaven of Ibsen's ideas worked on Strindberg's dramatic structure. The leaven of Shaw's ideas works on Pirandello's structure. In one of the best essays in English on Pirandello's work, Ruth Shepherd Phelps calls attention to the fact that Pirandello's plays all start with a fixed idea. Sometimes this fixed idea is in the mind of the author, as in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and *Thinking Makes it So*. Again the idea is implanted in the mind of the character. Implicit in his plays are the struggles of the individual against his environment, but he treats this struggle as a matter of arrangement more than of force. And his dramas are full of antitheses, the real versus the imaginary character; the reality of to-day versus the illusion of yesterday; the reality of the composition versus the reality of the execution; of the individual versus the synthesis of social fragments. Pirandello's dramas play upon the varying planes of illusion; they shred personality into its phases and moments; above

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all they insist upon the dominion of the idea over the event.

Six Characters in Search of an Author

Of all Pirandello's plays the most famous in America is *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. In this play the author indulges in creation on various planes. He dramatizes the artist's creative methods; he illuminates the differences between various kinds of reality; he censures the stage of our day. As an illustration of Pirandello's characteristic attitude toward life and truth, the following quotation from a speech by the Manager in this play is significant:

The Manager: If this fellow hasn't got a nerve! A man who calls himself a character comes and asks me who I am!

The Father: A character, sir, may always ask a man who he is. Because a character has really a life of his own, marked with his special characteristics; for which reason he is always "somebody." But a man — I'm not speaking of you now — may very well be "nobody."

Pirandello's chief plays: *Lumiedi Sicilia*, 1910, *Pensaci, Giacomino!* 1914, *Il piacere dell' Onesta*, 1914, *Il Berretto a sonagli*, 1915, *Liôla*, 1917, *Cose è (se vi pare)*, 1918, *Tutto per Bene*, 1920, *Come prima, meglio di Prima*, 1920, *L'Uomo, la Bestia e la Virtù*, 1919, *Ciascimo a suo modo*, 1920, *La ragioni degli altri*, *Sei Personaggi in cerca d'Autore*, 1921, *Enrico IV*, 1920, *Vestire gli ignudi*, 1923, *La vita che ti diede*, 1923.

Other Italian futurists are: F. T. Marinetti, who wrote *La Momie Sanglante*, 1909, *Il Re Baldoria*, 1909; Luigi Chiarelli, who wrote *La maschera e il volto*, 1916, Luigi Antonelli, who wrote *L'Uomo che incontrò se stesso*, *Fiaba dei tre maghi*; Enrico Cavacchioli, who wrote

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Uccello del Paradiso, Danza del ventre; Rosso di San Secondo, who wrote *Marionette, che passione*. Others are Sabatino Lopez, Bruno Corra, Emilio Settimelli, E. Corradina, Giovacchino Forzano.

THE FUTURIST THEATER IN RUSSIA

Backgrounds of Russian futurism In Russia as in Germany the clouds of war and approaching revolution threw their shadows before. Appropriately enough it was the artists and playwrights who first apprehended the signs of a coming social and moral revulsion. The naturalistic drama of Russia had for long been preaching and expounding the social and moral dangers of Russia. Chekhov in his fine and melancholy works represented a position far beyond revolutions or even resentments in a contemplative resignation. It was then that the flag of revolt was raised in the name of art. The revolt called for had no resemblance to the old accusatory revolt of the romanticists. It was made in the name of principles of beauty which had been discarded and of aspirations of soul that had been neglected. This revolt came in two forms: (1) an inspirational and high aspiring drama resembling somewhat the romantic drama in a magnified and symbolic form; (2) an experimental form, following the lead of Strindberg and Wedekind in the analysis of the mind into its zones and planes, and the creation of a soul drama on these different planes. To the first class belongs Leonid Andreyev; to the second class belongs Nicholas Evreinov.

Leonid Andreyev (1871-1919), is essentially a dramatist of the first Russian Revolution. As such he is inspired, rhetorical, rhapsodical, and impractical. He re-

flects ideas from a period of ferment. His imagination ranges widely and passionately, but never with profound understanding; and he tends to express himself through ponderous symbols. Tolstoy accused Andreyev of straining for effects, of an affected pessimism, of obscurity and hasty composition. His works were composed rapidly in days and nights of continuous dictation. His chief plays (titles in English): *To the Stars*, 1905, *Savva*, 1906, *The Life of Man*, 1906, *Tsar Hunger*, 1907, *The Black Maskers*, 1908, *Anathema*, 1909, *The Ocean*, 1911, *The Pretty Sabine Women*, 1912, *Professor Storitsyn*, 1912, *He Who Gets Slapped*, 1915, *The Waltz of the Dogs*, 1922.

At the other extreme stands Nicholas Evreinov, the proponent of "monodrama." In essence Evreinov stands for the discarding of the unit of personality in the theater in favor of the various entities that make up the soul. It is in the action and interaction, the flow and opposition between these, that drama lies. There is an element of parody and affectation in Evreinov along with other more serious qualities. Plays: *A Merry Death*, *The Beautiful Despot*, *The Theater of the Soul*, *The Chief Thing*.

THE NEW DRAMA IN AMERICA

The American theater emerges

It was during the World War that American drama finally threw off its bonds to the theater of the Continent and emerged in its own right as an independent art. As so often happens in new countries the hold of convention on the better forms of drama had been stronger in America than in England. When the movement for independence started, it was pushed with a corresponding vigor. The coming of a new American drama had been heralded by experiments in new forms of theater organization looking to the encouragement of the native playwright. Among

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these the New Theater, the Washington Square Players, and the Provincetown Players are notable. And larger urgencies had been playing their part. Nothing is more absurd than to presume that a drama waits upon its machinery or arrives the moment its machinery is proffered. The art itself creates its machinery out of the necessity of the artist. So it was in America. The American strain in drama had never been absent. It was present in the Indian and pioneer and immigrant plays. In the hands of Herne the provincial drama came very near to the highest artistic standards. But it did not reach them. It was at this moment that several playwrights began to apply to the practice of American playwriting some of the standards that had been worked out on the Continent. Fitch, Langdon Mitchell, Moody, and Eugene Walter applied to American materials methods they had learned from the study of the European theater. It remained for their successors to force the substance of American stage art into a form of its own. In this work two American playwrights of widely dissimilar gifts had a large part.

Percy MacKaye The son of the far-seeing Steele MacKaye, Percy MacKaye, entered the theater as a young man with romantic works in verse. He soon found that, adept as he was in these types of writing, these romantic plays did not come to grips with the time. Always gifted with strong social-mindedness he now turned to the pursuit of a form in which the nascent qualities of American life could find expression in stage art. The best opportunity for this he found outside the theater entirely in the activities of pageantry and masque.

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It was in the adaptation of these old forms to new uses that Percy MacKaye came into contact with the new stage art and proceeded to make himself its first apostle in America.

MacKaye's chief plays: *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, 1903, *Fenris, the Wolf*, 1905, *Jeanne d'Arc*, 1906, *Sappho and Phaon*, 1907, *The Scarecrow*, 1908, *Yankee Fantasies* (one-act plays), 1911, *To-Morrow*, 1913, *A Thousand Years Ago*, 1914, *The Masque of St. Louis*, 1914, *Caliban, by the Yellow Sands*, 1916, *Rip Van Winkle*, opera with Reginald de Koven, 1920, *Washington, the Man Who Made Us*, 1920, *This Fine Pretty World*, 1923.

*Eugene
O'Neill*

With a heredity not unlike that of Percy MacKaye, Eugene O'Neill has cultivated his talent in a different and much more detailed way. The son of a "star" of the old stage school, he has given his mind little to speculation about the theater of the future. But he has speculated much on the nature of man. And he studies man always under conditions which bring his salient qualities into relief. He began by studying men on the background of the sea. From this he proceeded to study men and women under the pressure of ancient inhibitions, traditions, frustrations, and defeat mechanisms. It was at this point that he too came under two influences: (1) the influence of the sardonic, supernaturalistic analytical method of Strindberg; (2) the influence of the synthetic and primitive schools of stage production. Under these two influences and in the forms they dictate, and working always with materials of a remarkable authenticity, he has created plays of great originality and imaginativeness. It must be admitted that he has not yet found a perfect fusion of his two influences, though

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much of his work achieves, in parts, a maturity of conception and form beyond anything done in America and comparing well with the best of European playwriting. Though touched with the wand of the grotesque, O'Neill differs from many futurists in that he is absolutely sincere. He cares nothing for shocks or paradoxes. In honesty of conviction he is comparable to Strindberg while avoiding his mental extravagances.

O'Neill's chief plays: One-acters: *Bound East for Cardiff*, 1916, *In the Zone*, 1917, *The Long Voyage Home*, 1917, *Ile*, 1917, *The Rope*, 1918, *Where the Cross is Made*, 1918, *The Moon of the Caribbees*, 1918, *The Dreamy Kid*, 1919; long plays: *Beyond the Horizon*, 1920, *The Emperor Jones*, 1920, *Diff'rent*, 1920, *Gold*, 1921, *Anna Christie*, 1921, *The Straw*, 1921, *The First Man*, 1922, *The Hairy Ape*, 1922, *Welded*, 1924, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, 1924, *Desire Under the Elms*, 1924, *The Fountain*, 1925, *The Great God Brown*, 1926, *Lazarus Laugh*s, 1927.

Susan Glaspell Aside from these two another playwright of genuine gift and an innovating method is Susan Glaspell. In the subtler ranges of psychology Miss Glaspell displays powers warranting comparison with Barker, Chekhov, and Lenormand while maintaining her own individuality.

Miss Glaspell's plays include *Suppressed Desires*, 1916, *Bernice*, 1919, *Inheritors*, 1921, *The Verge*, 1922. Revealing gifts of a high order are Zoë Akins, Clare Kummer, Booth Tarkington, Stuart Walker and Sidney Howard.

Among the more vigorous "futurists" of the American theater are J. H. Lawson, Elmer Rice, George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly, together and separately, Edmund Wilson and John Dos Passos.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

A SUMMARY OF CONTEMPORARY DRAMA BY COUNTRIES

Purpose of the summary IN this chapter are given, under simple headings, and by nations, lists of the chief dramatists of the nations under review in the body of this book. As a rule the lists cover a period of about a hundred years and extend up to our day. Only those dramatists are included who are considered to possess a representative vitality sufficient to find a place in the dramatic record of a century. Some inadvertent omissions have unquestionably been made. The classifications that follow are for convenience only and are not expected to designate accurately the writings of authors or to cover the styles of dramatic writing of the nations. As a rule facts regarding the authors named below may be gathered from the body of the book through reference to the index. Names of national playwrights not mentioned in this or in preceding lists may be gained by consulting books mentioned in the book lists at the end of chapters and at the end of the book.

ENGLAND

Poetic and closet dramatists of the nineteenth century: Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Landor, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne.

Theater poets and melodramatists: Shiel, Maturin, Talfourd, Wills, Westland Marston, Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer-Lytton.

English popular melodramatists: Jerrold, Boucicault,

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A'Beckett, Mark Lemon, Tom Taylor, Charles Reade, J. B. Buckstone, Ben Webster, Paul Merritt, H. Pettitt, G. R. Sims.

Dramatists of transition, 1860-90: James Albery, H. C. Merivale, Robert Buchanan, H. J. Byron, Sydney Grundy, Wilkie Collins, John Oxenford, T. W. Robertson, Tom Taylor, Charles Reade, W. S. Gilbert, E. L. Blanchard, F. C. Burnand.

Dramatists of the revival, 1885-1900: Henry Arthur Jones, A. W. Pinero, H. V. Esmond, R. C. Carton, Haddon Chambers, John Oliver Hobbes, J. K. Jerome, R. L. Stevenson, L. N. Parker, George Moore, Oscar Wilde.

Dramatists of the twentieth century: G. B. Shaw, Elizabeth Baker, H. Granville Barker, J. M. Barrie, Arnold Bennett, R. Besier, H. Brighouse, G. Cannan, H. Chapin, H. H. Davies, Basil Dean, J. B. Fagan, Guy Du Maurier, J. Drinkwater, S. M. Fox, J. O. Francis, J. Galsworthy, Cosmo Hamilton, B. M. Hastings, St. John Hankin, D. H. Lawrence, John Masefield, A. E. W. Mason, Somerset Maugham, Chas. McEvoy, Allan Monkhouse, A. Sutro, J. Todhunter, I. Zangwill, Ashley Dukes, C. K. Munro, H. Glover, A. A. Milne, Noel Coward, Stephen Phillips, Laurence Housman, Clifford Bax, John Davidson, Clemence Dane, Eden Phillpotts, George Calderon, Lascelles Abercrombie, Oliphant Down.

IRELAND

Dramatists of the Irish dramatic revival, 1890 to date: A. E., William Boyle, P. Colum, Lord Dunsany, St. John Ervine, George Fitzmaurice, Lady Gregory, Thomas McDonagh, Edward Martyn, Rutherford Mayne, George Moore, T. C. Murray, Sean O'Casey, Seumus O'Kelly, Lewis Purcell, Lennox Robinson, J. M. Synge, W. B. Yeats.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Literary drama of early and mid-century: Jas. Nelson Bar-

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ker, N. P. Willis, Cornelius Mathews, George H. Boker, Robert T. Conrad, John Howard Payne, Anna Cora Mowatt, Epes Sargent, Robert M. Bird, Richard Penn Smith, George H. Miles.

The end of the century: Augustin Daly, Mark Twain, W. D. Howells, Bronson Howard, James A. Herne, Edward Harrigan, Charles Hoyt, Steele MacKaye, Martha Morton, Marguerite Merington, Henry Guy Carlton, William Gillette.

Twentieth century: Clyde Fitch, David Belasco, Langdon Mitchell, George Ade, William Gillette, Augustus Thomas, George M. Cohan, Owen Davis, Lewis Beach, A. E. Thomas, L. K. Anspacher, Thompson Buchanan, Edward Sheldon, Eugene Walter, Charles Rann Kennedy, Percy MacKaye, William Vaughn Moody, James Forbes, Winchell Smith, James Montgomery, George C. Hazelton, Paul Kester, Clare Kummer, Susan Glaspell, Rachel Crothers, Charles Kenyon, George Middleton, J. H. Lawson, George Kelly, Marc Connolly, G. S. Kaufman, Sidney Howard, Elmer Rice, Lawrence Langner, Philip Moeller, Arthur Richman, Booth Tarkington, Ridgeley Torrence, Jesse Lynch Williams, Stuart Walker, Zoë Akins, Eleanor Gates, J. Hartley Manners, Cale Young Rice, Hatcher Hughes.

FRANCE

Playwrights of the romantic revival: Victor Hugo, A. Dumas, *père*, A. de Vigny, Jules Sandeau, Casimir Delavigne, A. de Musset, Prosper Mérimée.

Playwrights of theatercraft: E. Scribe, Victor Ducange, Adolphe Dennery, Ernest Legouvé, Victorien Sardou, Bouchardy, Feuillet, Bayard, Dumanoir, Barrière, Sandeau, Ohnet, Kistemaekers, Bernstein, Pierre Berton.

Comedians: Delphine Gay, Eugène Labiche, Edouard Pailleuron, Edmond Gondinet, Meilhac et Halévy.

Naturalists and playwrights of the Théâtre Libre: Becque,

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- Ancey, Courteline, Jullien, Méténier, the de Goncourts, Zola, Paul Alexis, Alphonse Daudet, Fernand Ives, J. H. Rosny, Louis de Gramont, Maurice Barrès, Léon Hennique-Gaston Salandri, H. Céard, E. Fabre, Albert Guinon, Romain Coolus, E. Bourgeois, Villiers de l'Isle Adam.
- Playwrights of ideas, mid-century: Dumas, *fils*, E. Augier.
- Playwrights of ideas of the revival: Porto-Riche, Donnay, Bataille, Capus, de Croisset, Lavedan, Lemaitre, Vandérem, Guiches, de Curel, Hervieu, Bourget, Brioux, Mirbeau, Edmond Sée.
- Recent comedy: Bisson, Courteline, Feydeau, Bernard, Veber, Sacha Guitry, de Flers et Caillavet.
- Poetic dramatists, 1875 to date: Théodore de Banville, Leconte de Lisle, François Coppée, Catulle Mendès, Alfred Poizat, André Suarès, Jules Bois, Pierre Frondaie, Albert Samain, André Rivoire, Miguel Zamacoïs, Jean Richepin, Edmond Rostand, Maurice Bouchor, Rodolphe Darzens, Paul Claudel.
- Twentieth-century dramatists: George Duhamel, H. R. Lenormand, Anatole France, Henri Ghéon, Vildrac, Valéry, Larbaud, Jules Renard.

GERMANY

- Poetic dramatists, early nineteenth century, North Germany: Kleist, Grabbe, Hebbel, Michael Beer, Ernst Raupach, Otto Ludwig, Adam Oehlenschläger, H. L. Immermann, K. Gutzkow, E. Geibel, Robert Griepenkerl.
- Austrian dramatists, early and mid-century: F. Grillparzer, F. Halm, F. Raimund, J. Nestroy, S. H. von Mosenthal, E. von Bauernfeld, L. Anzengruber.
- Playwrights of theatercraft including French influence: K. von Holtei, H. Laube, Friedrich Kaiser, R. von Gottschall, A. E. Brachvogel, Roderich Benedix, Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer, A. Fitger, G. Freytag, A. Lindner, G. von Moser, Richard Voss, A. A'Arronge, F. von Schönthan, O. Blumenthal, Paul Lindau.

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Later romance and poetic drama: Paul Heyse, Adolf Wilbrandt, Ernst Wildenbruch, Ludwig Fulda, Carl Hauptmann, Hofmannsthal.

The dramatic revival: Gerhart Hauptmann, Sudermann, Halbe, Otto Ernst, Max Dreyer, F. A. Beyerlein, Hartleben, Hirschfeld, Rosmer, Schönherr, Schnitzler, Thoma, Bahr.

The newer movements: Wedekind, Eulenberg, Stefan Zweig, P. Apel, Kaiser, Hasenclever, Toller, Emil Gött, Ruederer, Fritz Stavenhagen, R. Lothar, R. Dehmel, Sternheim, Fritz Werfel.

SPAIN

Nineteenth-century romance: Hartzenbusch, José Zorrilla, Ángel de Saavedra, Antonio García Gutiérrez, Tamayo y Baus, Bréton de los Herreros.

Social ideas: José Echegaray, Benito Pérez Galdós, Eugenio Sellés, Leopoldo Cano, Joaquín Dicenta, José Lopez Pinilos, Linares Rivas, José Felin y Codina.

Género chico: Tomás Luceno, Ricardo de la Vega, Javier de Burgos, Félipe Pérez y Gonzales, Vital Aza, Carlos Fernándes Shaw, Carlos Arniches, José Lopez Silva.

Provincial drama: Angel Guimerá, José de Gran.

New twentieth-century drama: Jacinto Benavente, Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Eduardo Marquina, Francisco Villaespesa, Antonio Rey Soto, Ramón Goy de Silva, Jacinto Grau Delgado, Joaquín and Serafín Quintero.

ITALY

Romantic playwrights, early nineteenth century: Allessandri Manzoni, Ugo Foscolo, Giovanni Niccolini, Pietro Cossa, Paolo Giacometti, Paolo Ferrari.

Playwrights of naturalism, problems and ideas, mid-century to the present: Giuseppi Giacosa, Giovanni Verga, Luigi Capuana, Gerolama Rovetta, Signore Amalia Rosselli, Teresa Ubertis (Teresah), Marco Praga, Enrico Butti,

TWENTIETH-CENTURY DRAMA

Antonio Fogazzaro, Camillo Antona-Traversi, Giannino Antona-Traversi, Roberto Bracco, Augusto Novelli, Alfredo Testoni, Dario Niccodemi.

The grotesque schools and comedy: Washington Borg, Luigi Pirandello, Sabatino Lopez, F. T. Marinetti, Bruno Corra, Chiarelli, Emilio Settimelli, Rosso di San Secondo.

The new romance: Gabriele d'Annunzio, Sem Benelli.

OTHER COUNTRIES

Norway, since Ibsen: Knut Hamsun, Gunnar Heiberg, Sigurd Ibsen, Alexander Kielland, Jonashie Alvilde Prydz, H. Wiers-Jenssen.

Sweden, since Strindberg: Hans Alin, Verner von Heidenstein, Per Hallström, Hjalmar Bergman.

Denmark: Edvard Brandes, Holger Drachmann, Albert Gnuddtzmänn, Einar Christiansen, Sven Lange, Gustav Wied, Hjalmar Bergström.

Iceland: Matthías Jochumsson, Indridi Einarsson, Johann Sigurjónsson.

Yiddish: Marc Arnstein, Sholom Asch, Solomon Bloomgarden, J. Halpern, Leon Kobrin, Z. Levin, I. L. Perez, S. J. Rabinowitz, David Pinski, Perez Hirschbein, Sholom Aleikhem, Jacob Gordin, Abraham Goldfaden.

Russia: M. Artzybashev, Leonid Andreyev, Anton Chekov, Yevgeni Chirikov, Maxim Gorky, Ilya Lurguchev, N. Evreinov, I. Narodny, Feodor Sologub, S. Stepniak, A. Tolstoy.

Poland: Stanislas Przybyszewski.

Czecho-Slovakia: Karel and Josef Kapek, Viktor Dyk, J. Kvapil, F. A. Subert, J. Vrchlicky.

Hungary: Ferenc Molnar, Lajos Biró, Melchior Lengyel, Ernest Vajda.

Holland: Hermann Heijermans, Jan Fabricius, H. C. J. Roelvink, J. H. Speenhof.

Belgium: Gustave Vanzype, Emile Verhaeren, Edmond Picard, Henri Maubel, Georges Rodenbach, Fernand

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Crommelynck, César Dauneels, François Léonard, G. Eckhoud.

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